

100 IELTS Speaking Part 2 Topics in 2016, 2017 & Band 8.0+ Sample Answers

Describe a time you needed to use imagination

You should say:

what the situation was;

why you needed to use imagination;

what the difficulties were;

and explain how you felt about it.

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BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would like to talk about the time I had to get **out of my comfort zone** to join an Innovation Challenge Contest which made me think out of the box and **work flat out** to become the runner-up.

This annual contest is open to all undergraduates and post-graduates around the world. Each year this contest **draws the attention** of more than 30 000 people so it was really competitive and challenging for me. Therefore, when I was awarded the **runner-up** prize, I was **deliriously happy** and **extraordinarily excited**.

The goal of the Challenge was to recognize individuals and organizations that were working on **internet-based solutions** to promote education and **economic empowerment** in countries throughout the world. Therefore, it really required

creativity and imagination from each team joining the contest. I had to **buckle down** and **brainstorm** ideas for the challenge until **I came up with** the best one to be accepted for 4 consequent rounds.

At the end of the day, my team and I had really **gone extra miles** to become the runners-up and it was really an unforgettable experience to me. After all, I can **take pride in** myself for all the thing I achieved with my imagination and creativity.

Vocabulary:

Get/Step out of the comfort zone: Do things that you wouldn't normally do

Example: If you want something you never had, I should step out of your comfort zone and work flat out to fulfil your dream.

Think out of the box: Think differently, unconventionally or from a new perspective

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Work flat out: work very hard

Runner-up: A team/player/competitor finishing in second place

Deliriously happy [collocation] very happy

Extraordinarily excited [collocation] very excited

Empowerment: the giving of an ability, enablement or permission

Example: The government believes strongly in the empowerment of women.

Buckle down: to begin to work seriously at something. Example:

If you don't buckle down to your job, you'll be fired.

Brainstorm: a good idea; an idea that enters one's head suddenly.

Example: I had a sudden brainstorm and got out of bed to write it down.

Go the extra miles: to do more than one is required to do to reach a goal

Example: My teacher goes the extra mile to help us.

Take pride in: to feel pleased about someone or what they have done

Example: They take pride in their son's many accomplishments. He takes pride in the fact that he's never asked his parents for any money.

At the end of the day: in the end

Example: We interviewed many people for the job, but at the end of the day, we don't think any of them could handle it.

Describe a game or sport that you enjoy playing.

You should say:

- *what kind of sport that is;*
- *who you play it with;*
- *where you play it;*

and explain why you think doing this is healthy.

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Band 9.0 Sample Answer

I'm not a great swimmer in any sense but swimming is like my religion. It is truly **refreshing** and **literally**, washes away every **disturbing** thought I have

whenever I dive into cold water. No matter how tight my schedule may get, I usually pay at least one visit to a local swimming pool to **work myself up** and get **rejuvenated**.

Sometimes, I have a partner or two, who have been my best friends since high school. We live in the same neighborhood so it's not too stressful when we have to set a schedule for our swimming session. We carpool **more often than not** and it takes us roughly 15 minutes to get to the local **recreation center** where it **provides** the locals **with** a variety of facilities for training purpose such as gym class, stadium, swimming pool, tennis court and so on, which is **extremely convenient** for those who practice more than one activity. The only thing better than swimming itself is swimming with your besties, which is one of hundreds of things I love about my weekly **ritual**. Hardly do we have time to meet each other during week days as we're all **up to our neck** at work and totally stressed out. Therefore, having such a healthy way to catch up with my friends and **recharge battery** after an exhausting week never sounds better. Just like any other sports, swimming helps **maintain your health, keep you fit** as well as **build your endurance**. However, unlike others, it's a very relaxing and peaceful form of exercise, you don't even sweat for hours – a supreme advantage. Therefore, if you're looking for a kind of sport that brings you comfort and **relaxation**, swimming should be your first choice.

Vocabulary & Useful expression

- **refreshing (a):** making you feel less tired or hot
- **literally (adv):** in a literal manner or sense; exactly
- **disturbing (a):** making you feel anxious and upset or shocked
- **work up:** make yourself or another person excited or upset

- **rejuvenate (v):** make somebody/something look or feel younger, more lively or more modern
- **more often than not:** usually
- **recreation center:** a building that is open to the public where meetings are held, sports are played, and there are activities available for young and old people
- **ritual (n):** something that is done regularly and always in the same way
- **be up to neck:** to be very busy
- **endurance (n):** the ability to continue doing something painful or difficult for a long period of time without complaining

Describe an old friend you enjoy talking with.

You should say:

- *who this person is*
- *how you knew him/her*
- *what you usually talk about*

and explain why you want to talk to this person.

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

I have always been lucky enough to be surrounded by a **large circle of friends** who are **incredibly supportive**, compassionate and open-minded. And everybody knows how precious it is to have such a gift and I, of all people, know better than **taking that for granted**. That is why I always **make effort to keep in touch with** people I've become close with and one of whom is my ex-boss, aka my mentor – Eli.

Admittedly, it's far from an ordinary relationship for most people, but to Eli and I, it **came naturally**. We first met during the training course we both attended for a luxurious soon-to-be-open restaurant in town roughly 2 years ago. Eli was our Filipino manager and I was about to be a hostess for the very first time. Every concept, every rule and every etiquette when working in hospitality industry just overwhelmed me and if it hadn't been for Eli, a patient teacher as well as a dedicated friend, I wouldn't have managed to complete my training and **achieved high performance** at our workplace. However, **thanks to** those hard times we've been through together, we became closer and our conversations would last endlessly ranging from family, career, happiness to setbacks in life. As a predecessor, Eli usually **offers me valuable advice** and **emotional support** whenever I **confine in** him. No lecturing. No "I told you so". Just pure compassion. He always tries to **bring out the best** in people instead of being **Mr. Know-it-all** and patronizing, which is one of million things I admire about him.

Even though we are no longer working together and hanging out more often than we should, our **strong bond** has never got loose. We **keep each other in the loop** about everything significant happening around us and **provide mutual support** if needed. Once in a while, we would meet over coffee or dinner to catch up if our schedules allow and still, I truly, deeply treasure every moment together.

Vocabulary & Useful expression

- **a large circle of friends**: a number of friends who usually do things together
- **take something/ someone for granted**: fail to appreciate the value of something/ someone

Ex: He has always taken her for granted, which is the main reason why they split up.

- **make effort to do something**: do something even though you find it hard to do

Ex: Her parents made effort to reconcile their relationship but it didn't work out.

- **keep/remain/stay in touch with**: maintain communications with

- **come naturally**: to be naturally easy to someone

Ex: Josh's ability to play guitar came naturally when he was young.

- **roughly**: approximately

- **achieve high performance**: do an excellent job

Ex: They spend hours practicing everyday to achieve high performance in a play-off round.

- **hard time**: difficulty that can be overcome with effort

Ex: 2017 is going to be a hard time for real estate market.

- **offer (valuable/ practical/ useful...) advice**

- **(offer/ provide...) emotional support**

- **confide in someone**: to trust someone with one's secret or personal problem

Ex: Jack always has difficulty confiding in anyone but his twin.

- **bring out the best/ the worst in someone**: cause someone to behave in the best/ worst manner

Ex: Susan is a bad influence. She always brings out the worst in me.

- **Mr. Know-it-all** (informal) (disapproving): someone who acts as if he/ she knows everything

Ex: We can't get along with Steve, who plays Mr. Know-it-all every time someone raises a question as if we asked for his opinion.

- **no longer = not anymore:**

Ex: Tom no longer smoked since his wife was pregnant.

- **keep someone in the loop:** keep someone informed about something

Ex: We keep you in the loop if we have any update about the contract.

Describe a bicycle/motorbike/car trip that is interesting

You should say:

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- *Where you would like to go*
- *How you would like to go there*
- *Who you would like to go with*
- *And explain why you would like to go there by car, motorbike or bike*

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

There is a thing that troubles me **more often than not** when living in [___] is the **majority** of people are riding motorbikes rather than cars. As a result, most people don't know how to drive a car, I included, which also itches me since I have always wanted to take a road trip across the country. A road trip by car from the south to the north of my country would be tough

and **adventurous** because hundreds of **marvelous destinations** are awaiting to be explored. However, it is worth **taking risks** and **stepping out of your comfort zone** to truly **experience** what life **has to offer** when your legs can still carry you rather than to regret in your later life.

“If you wanna go fast, go alone. If you wanna go far, go together.” It might be fun if you were a **lone traveler** and didn’t enjoy **getting lagged behind** your schedule. Still, the adventure could be more colorful and unexpected, hopefully in a good way, when you got company, especially during a long journey like the one I prefer. Hence, picking up a close friend or two who share the same vision, the same **eagerness to capture the beauty** of nature would be my choice. We would start from the south where we are living and move north on the go, stopping at our favorite beaches a little longer than other places because there ain’t nobody don’t have time for juicy coconuts and white sand paradise. Traditional **cuisine** would also be our **utmost priority** whenever we reach a new place as the best way to live like a local is to eat like a local. A car is our best choice because it would **give us room to comfortably converse with** each other and **shelter** from **inclement weather** during our journey, if any. It is not only about the destinations but also about the time I would love to spend with my dear friends as we would share the same space in **a four-wheel vehicle** along the road; and **at the end of the day**, it’s the people that matters.

Vocabulary & Useful Expression

- **more often than not:** usually
- **take risks:** to do something that might be dangerous
- **have to offer:** have something available to be used or appreciated
- **get lagged behind:** get fallen behind
- **cuisine (n):** style of cooking

- **utmost (a)**: greatest; most extreme
- **inclement (a)**: (of the weather) not pleasant; cold, wet, etc.
- **at the end of the day**: in the end, finally
- **shelter (v)**: protect or shield from something harmful, especially bad weather

Describe a family member you are closest to

You should say:

- *who this person is;*
- *describe some things you have done together;*

and explain why you like this person.

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

I'm grateful to have such a **supportive** and **caring** family who are always there for me no matter what. We have 5 members in the house that's always **full of laughter**: my parents, my two sisters and me. Even though I **love them all to the moon and back**, my younger sister, Jade, is the one that's closest to me.

Jade is seven years younger than me, which might create some sense of **generation gap**, yet, we still **get along well**, or at least most of the time. She is in high school now and has a dream of becoming a doctor one day. In term of appearance, we **have little in common**. **By that I mean** while I'm kind of tall, she's relatively short; while I **take after** my father, she's my mom's **splitting image**. Same thing with our characteristics. I am **people-oriented** and a true free

spirit, Jade, on the contrary, is quite **introverted** and into stability. Hence, **it came as a huge surprise** when others acknowledge our strong bond. We're like **2 sides of the same coin**. No matter how different we are, we have never **neglected** or **abandoned** each other. In fact, we are **partners in crime** in so many **impulsive** and silly acts that our family has **lost count**. Once, I tried to **play the victim** with my uncle as I accidentally broke a crystal vase that my aunt adored, Jade **backed me up** as we **put the blame on** our poor cousin. What a **shameful** act! But that was years ago and we **learnt our lesson the hard way**. Another time when my sister's teacher asked to meet our parents because Jade had ditched class. **In her defense**, that subject was boring and I was the one who talked to her teacher. In the end, Jade had to serve more time at the library and we kept this from our parents and so were many other things. We **got each other's back** and we always will because that's what sisters do and simply because I love her.

Vocabulary & Useful expression

- **love someone/ something to the moon and back:** love someone/ something more than anything
- **get along well:** have a harmonious or friendly relationship
- **have ... in common:** to share interests or characteristics
- **take after:** resemble (a parent or ancestor)
- **splitting image:** a person who bears a strong physical resemblance to another, esp to a relative
- **2 sides of the same coin:** very closely related although they seem different
- **partners in crime:** good friends who get in trouble together or get each other in trouble

- **impulsive (a):** acting suddenly without thinking carefully about what might happen because of what you are doing
- **lost count:** to fail to be able to count someone or something, especially because there are so many
- **play the victim:** the act of pretending to be the one who has been done wrong to manipulate others or seek attention
- **back someone up = have one's back:** support or help someone
- **put the blame on = blame something on someone = blame someone for something:** say that someone or something has done something bad
- **learn something the hard way:** learn something by experience, especially by an unpleasant experience
- **in someone's defense:** used at the beginning of a sentence to indicate that the subsequent statement will justify some action or decision one made

Describe a language other than English that you would like to learn.

You should say:

- *what the language is*
- *where it is spoken*
- *what you think would be difficult*
- *what would be easy about learning the language*

and explain why you would like to learn it.

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

Learning a second language not only **adds up** your skills but also **offers enormous benefits** for your brain and **personal growth**. Additionally, being bilingual or multilingual **expands your knowledge** across the country's border and **provides you easy access to** the understanding of other cultures. Therefore, beside English, Spanish sits high in my must-learn list due to its **wide application** and beautiful culture.

Needless to say, Spanish is one of the most spoken languages in the world and one of the six **official languages** used in United Nations conferences and statements. Spanish is spoken in most countries in South and Central America and in the US, over 50 million people are using Spanish either as their **mother tongue** or second language. As a result, knowing Spanish would absolutely **widen your horizon**, develop your **sense of appreciation** for Hispanic culture as well as **transform your travel experience** as who knows when you would bump into some Spanish friends on your adventure. Many have said that Spanish is one of the easiest languages to learn **thanks to** its phonetic pronunciation and its **similarity** with English, **in terms of** vocabulary. However, it's **easier said than done**. No matter how simple and intriguing that may sound, without **full commitment** and **self-discipline**, being able to speak Spanish would be a **far-fetched** idea. Therefore, in order to meet my goal and not to get **demotivated** along the way, I would have to find a learning partner and we would fight this tough war together.

Vocabulary & Useful expression

- **application (n)**: practical use of something
- **mother tongue (n)**: the language that you first learn to speak when you are a child

- **appreciation (n):** pleasure that you have when you recognize and enjoy the good qualities of somebody/something
- **in terms of:** used to show what aspect of a subject you are talking about or how you are thinking about it
- **commitment (n):** the willingness to work hard and give your energy and time to a job or an activity
- **self-discipline (n):** the ability to make yourself do something, especially something difficult or unpleasant
- **far-fetched (a):** very difficult to believe
- **demotivated (a):** feeling that it is not worth making an effort

Describe a television program that you like to watch.

You should say:

what program it is

what the program is about

how often you watch it

and explain why you like watching this program.

Band 8.0 Sample Answers:

Over the course of my life, I have been watching a lot of television programs, ranging from scientific to reality shows. However, the TV program that I am **addicted to** is the Apprentice on NBC channel. The show **airs** for about 30

minutes, twice a week. The show is **hosted** by Donal Trump, one of the richest and most powerful billionaires in the world.

There are often 10 people in each episode and all the participants are young, dynamic, enthusiastic and talented people from **all walks of life**. Despite of different backgrounds, they all share the same dream of becoming successful people, which is the very reason why they join this program.

The Apprentice is **regarded among** one of the most popular educational TV programs. Watching this program, I can **gain a deeper insight into** the business world and about obstacles that people have to **encounter and overcome** in order to succeed.

This program is useful for not only business people but also young people like me. It inspires us and motivates us to **advance in our career paths**.

Describe A Movie You Recently Watched

What was the movie?

When and where did you watch it?

Did you like it? Why?

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

Lately, I haven't had much time to go out for a movie since I've been **up to my eyeballs in** reports and presentations. Hence, to relax and **boost** my mood, I rented some good old movies and made myself some healthy snacks for late night

treat. “Silver Linings Playbook” is one of my all-time favorites and I’ve **lost count** how many times I replayed it.

The last time I watched it was a week ago on Saturday night. Oscar nominated movies were usually not my taste due to their **complexity** and lack of entertainment but Silver Linings Playbook was an exception. I’ve always preferred something a little **sentimental, light-hearted**, yet meaningful and this movie had it all. Silver Linings Playbook was an **adaptation** from the novel written by Matthew Quick, starring two incredibly talented actors Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence. This romantic comedy movie was about two **wounded** souls who once again found beauty in the most unexpected place. Pat (Bradley), a former teacher, was just released from a mental **institution** and trying to **reconcile** with his cheated wife despite his family’s protest. He met Tiffany (Jennifer), a woman with problems of her own, and things got complicated. Two people bearing hidden scars with no hope in the future finally had lights in their lives again. The movie was not heavy at all but extremely **entertaining** with some laugh-out-loud moments. No matter how many times I’ve watched it, I still got emotional every time I replayed it. The **underlying** message was also a **shout-out** to anyone who believe they have **hit rock bottom**: “When one door closes, another door opens”. Therefore, **keep moving forward** and don’t lose hope. If anyone **run out of** movies to watch, I highly recommend “Silver Linings Playbook” as a change of appetite.

- **Be up to one’s eyeballs** (idiom): to be very busy with something
- **Boost** (v): to make something increase, or become better or more successful
- **Lose count**: forget how many of something there are, especially because the number is so high

- **Complexity** (n): the state of being formed of many parts; the state of being difficult to understand
- **Sentimental** (a): producing emotions such as pity, romantic love or sadness, which may be too strong or not appropriate; feeling these emotions too much
- **Light-hearted** (a): intended to be amusing or easily enjoyable rather than too serious
- **Adaptation** (n): a film/movie, book or play that is based on a particular piece of work but that has been changed for a new situation
- **Wounded** (a): feeling emotional pain because of something unpleasant that somebody has said or done
- **Institution** (n): a building where people with special needs are taken care of, for example because they are old or mentally ill
- **Reconcile** (v): to make people become friends again after an argument or a disagreement
- **Entertaining** (a): interesting and amusing
- **Underlying** (a): important in a situation but not always easily noticed or stated clearly
- **Shout-out** (n): a message of congratulation, support, or appreciation
- **Hit rock bottom** (idiom): to reach the lowest possible level or be in the worst possible situation
- **Run out of**: (of a supply of something) be used up

Describe the best experience of your school/university life you have had

You should say:

- *What it was,*
- *when it was,*
- *why it happened,*

and explain why it was the best of experience

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

It was almost 8 years since I competed in an English Speaking Contest, standing on a big stage in front of a **hundred-strong crowd** to **deliver** one of the best **speeches** I've ever given with the support of my friends. That was something you can never forget in your whole life and the most **magnificent** moment, **bar none**, of my high school highlights.

Never had it **crossed my mind** that one day I would be on stage talking about the thing I treasured most in my life – my family and friends or just be **qualified** enough to **represent** the entire school compete at such competition. If it hadn't been for my English teacher's **constant encouragement**, I wouldn't have participated in the contest **in the first place**. Students were free to choose their topics and were asked to present it in front of a **panel of judges** and audience. It sounded **intimidating** for so many reasons but I had **managed to subdue** my anxiety and learned to believe in myself. Preparation for D-day was tough for everyone, both emotionally and physically. We kept practicing nonstop for 4 hours straight, every single day; me trying to perfect my pronunciation and **acquire** that American accent, my friends **singing their heart out** Miley Cyrus's song "True Friend" since we wanted to **kick our performance up the notch** by featuring some musical element. Our hard work had finally **paid off** with us bringing home the Champion Cup as well as Best Performance Award. It **brought me to**

tears as I realized at that moment it wouldn't have mattered if we hadn't won because we already won when we got over ourselves, **stepped out of our comfort zone** and kept going till the end. That was our true victory. Until now, the lesson I've learnt 8 years ago still has its own value and will always be there to remind me of those good old days.

Vocabulary & Useful Expression

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- **deliver a speech:** give a speech
- **magnificent (a):** extremely attractive and impressive
- **bar none:** with no exceptions
- **cross one's mind:** to come into your thoughts as a possibility
- **represent (v):** act or speak officially for somebody
- **constant encouragement**
- **in the first place:** in the beginning
- **panel of judges:** a group of persons selected to act as a team to judge a contest
- **intimidating (a):** frightening in a way which makes a person feel less confident
- **subdue(v):** calm or control your feelings
- **sing one's heart out:** to sing with vigor or intensity
- **kick something up the notch:** to do something with vigor or intensity
- **pay off:** yield good results, succeed
- **bring someone to tears:** to bring someone to the point of crying
- **step out of comfort zone:** do things that you don't feel comfortable with doing

Describe a sport that you would like to learn.

You should say:

what sport it is

how you would learn it

how difficult you think it would be to learn

and explain why you would like to learn this sport.

Band 8.5 Suggested Answer:

There are many kinds of sports which people like learning these days, such as baseball, basketball, volleyball, and cricket but I would like to learn football which is **so-called the king of sports**.

Football is the popular kind of sports in almost all countries in the world. Basically, it is a **collective game** with 2 teams and each team has 11 players. The main purpose is that players try to keep their goal safe and kick the ball to the net of their opponents. Scores are recorded and the winner is the team having higher scores.

It is the most famous sports in my country and all of my family members favor this sports, especially my father and my brother. Thus, I had a chance to **approach this sport** since I was 7 years old. I really love learning it because of the drama and surprise in each match.

From my perspectives, it is really difficult to learn to play soccer well. A player needs to be very strong to **compete with others**, and be **skillful in ball**

controlling, heading as well as having **team spirit**. A good football team needs to have **solidarity** as well as the ability to control the game. Therefore, normally there is a coach for each team and this person is not less famous than other players.

Describe a person who can use or speak a second language.

Please say

- *Who this person is?*
- *What language can he/she use?*
- *How often does he/she use it?*

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Band 8.0+ Sample Answer

Initially, I think I can start off by pointing out something about who this person is. Actually, I know quite a lot people who are **bilingual**, however I'd like to share about my best friend who is fluent in Japanese. Her name is Nguyen and she is currently working in a Japanese **corporate**. In fact, she is the one who has inspired me a lot to learn the second language. The factor that makes her unique to me is the fact that despite **acquiring** Japanese on her own, she managed to become excellent at it with gorgeous intonation like a native speaker. The **chief** reason encouraging her to learn this language is indeed quite simple. When she was in university, she **fell in love with** a Japanese person and gradually became addicted to this country's culture and language. Therefore, she **exerted herself** and put a lot of effort in Japanese with the first target of being able to communicate with her boyfriend in his mother tongue. Time went by and her passion for this language grew so strong that she committed herself to **conquer** it, no matter how hard it is when **it comes to the matter** of self – study. However at

the end of the day, she achieved it **with flying colors** and lots of opportunities come to her after graduation from university. It is my friend who gives me a precious lesson in life: Do the thing you are truly passionate about and you will rock it.

Vocabulary

- Bilingual (a): speaking two language fluently
- Corporate (n): a company or a group
- Acquire (v): obtain, to get
- Chief (a): most important
- Fall in love with (idiom): to begin to love someone
- Exert oneself (expression): put oneself to strenuous effort
- Conquer (v): overcome and take control of something
- At the end of the day (idiom): finally
- With flying colors (idiom): successfully.

Describe something you bought but you were not happy with. You should say:

- *What this thing is?*
- *When did you buy it?*
- *Why were you not happy with it?*
- *How did you react?*

Band 8.0+ Sample Answer

Actually in my life, I have performed many different **transactions** which give me both sense of satisfaction and **discontent**. However if I have to **pick out** one item that really **let me down**, I would name the birthday cake that I bought for my sister 2 years ago. Now **with reference to** why I were not **content** with it, I suppose there was a combination of reasons here. One of them was its **exorbitant** price. On my sister's birthday, I had an emergency at work and it took me almost all day till 11 pm to resolve it. Although it **cost me an arm and a leg** to buy the cake, I still decided to take it since it was the only bakery shop stayed open that late. Everything would be fine if it tasted good but unfortunately the cake was of terrible quality. It tasted way too sweet and was not **appetizing** at all. Thus, I was kind of regretful, choosing to purchase the cake instead of any other present for my sister. Actually as I had to **splash out on** the cake and received almost nothing back, I tended to be more careful to make really **sensible** buying decision from that on.

Vocabulary

- Transaction (n): an instance of buying or selling something
- Discontent (n): dissatisfaction, lack of contentment
- Pick out (phrasal verb): to choose
- Let someone down (expression): fail to support or help someone as they expected
- With reference to (expression): about
- Content (a): in a state of peaceful happiness
- Exorbitant (a): (price) unreasonably high
- Cost an arm and a leg (idiom): be extremely expensive
- Appetizing (a): delicious
- Splash out (phrasal verb): to spend a lot of money on something
- Sensible (a): in accordance with wisdom and prudence

Describe a time when you are very busy

You should say

When it was

What you had to do during that time

How you managed it

And explain how you felt about being busy

BAND 8.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

One such busy time I really remember was the time when I had the deadline to submit my thesis paper which is the ultimate assignment to gain a Master Degree in International Relations.

This thesis paper is **of great importance** to me because it will decide whether I can get through the master course **with flying color** or not. I had just 1 month to complete my thesis paper but I had a full-time job which accounted for 8 hours per day so I had hardly few hours left for this graduation paper. I was also a **procrastinator** who always **waits until the last minute** to do anything which made me **fall behind my schedule** for my thesis paper submission.

Moreover, the thesis was really complex and challenging, therefore, I had tons of tasks waiting for me to be **carried out** such as collecting data for the report in the thesis, doing group discussions to **brainstorm good ideas** for the thesis and **surfing high and low** to collect information online as references for the thesis. I even didn't have time left for my personal stuff. To be more specific, I did not spend time on visiting my parents for the whole month even though they were in the same town. I couldn't also visit some close friends, maintain my social

networking profiles and update my blog. I did not feel good about it so it was **particularly stressful** to me.

However, I knew that I had to **stay motivated** and productive to **get through** this hard time. I worked flat out and **put a lot of time and effort into** it to meet **worked flat out** and put a lot of time and effort into it to meet **tight deadlines** and get the best results for the thesis paper. **For the sake of** that, I got a **straight 'A'** in my thesis, continued my job and did well in my term final. I had to sacrifice a lot and maintain a **strict routine** and stop lots of my other activities that I usually do. **At the end of the day**, it was **well worth** the effort and time!

Describe a country you have visited

You should say:

- *Where is this country*
- *When did you visit it?*
- *What were the interesting things about this country*

BAND 8.0 SAMPLE ANSWER

I suppose I should begin by **highlighting** the point of where this country is. In actual fact, the countries that I have visited so far can be **counted on the fingers of one hand**. Among those, India is the one that truly **amazed** me by many factors. India has a very long history, the country is very big and has the second largest population in the world. I guess this is why there are so much to see. For me, one of the most interesting places in India is The Ganges River, which is well – known as the longest and holiest river in India. While most rivers around the world are

for **recreation** or sports, the Ganges has many other functions. As the Indians believe, that the river is **holy**, people come here to pray and wash themselves in its water. In addition, the river also has thousands of people who wash their clothes by beating them on rocks. The other thing that often impresses tourist is the unique architect of Hindu temples all over India and visitors can enter at any time. The temples are usually **immense** and have **antique** statues that are thousands of years old. Visitors are also welcome to eat and sleep in the temples at night if they have no place to go. After all, I have to say that **paying this beautiful country the second visit** in future is one of the **prioritized** items on my **bucket list**.

Vocabulary

- Highlight (v): to pick out and emphasize
- Count on the fingers of one hand (idiom): to express that ST is very scarce
- Amaze (v): surprise someone strongly
- Recreation (n): entertainment
- Holy (a): sacred
- Immense (a): very large
- Antique (a): old
- Pay a visit (expression): visit
- Prioritize (v): treat something as more important than the other things

Describe a vehicle you would like to own or something expensive you would like to buy.

- *What it is?*
- *Why do you want to own it?*
- *When are you going to buy it?*

Band 8.0+ Sample Answer

Regarding the fact that I am **crazy about** exploring the spaces, I have to say if I was a billionaire and had an **enormous** amount of money, I would probably buy a spaceship for my own exploration adventures. The main reason **accounting for** this intention is that ever since I was a kid, I have always held a strong **yearning** for becoming an astronaut. Therefore, having my own personal spacecraft would give me the opportunity to **fulfill** my childhood's dream. There is a **myriad** of purposes for my spacecraft, one of them is that I would use my spacecraft to visit other planets in the outer space and maybe one day I could find a **habitable** place for people. This certainly would be a great discovery for human being especially when The Earth is currently flooded by trash and **contaminants**. In addition, since photography is one of my hobbies, it would be fantastic to take pictures of different **celestial bodies** from the space. Although this may sound crazy, I think with **remarkable** innovations in science, a spacecraft would become **affordable** for people in the years to come.

Vocabulary:

- Regarding to (exp): about
- crazy about (a): like something very much
- Enormous (a): huge, very large
- Account for (phrasal verb): explain
- Yearning (n): a feeling of intense longing for something
- Fulfill (v): to complete, to achieve
- A myriad of something (exp): a huge number/ amount of something
- Habitable (a): suitable or good enough to live
- Contaminant (n): pollutants
- Celestial (a): positioned or relating to the sky

- Remarkable (a): striking, worthy of attention
- Affordable (a): inexpensive, reasonably priced.

Describe something you make by yourself.

- *What the thing is?*
- *How do you make it?*
- *Why do you like it?*

Band 8.0+ Sample Answer

I guess I could begin by saying something about what this thing is. In fact, I am not that **meticulous** and patient therefore the things that I have created by myself **can be counted on the fingers of one hand**. However one thing that made me really proud of is the kite that I made when I was 7 years old. In fact, it was also the very first thing that I created all the parts **from scratch**. Another part worth mentioning is the making process of this toy. Well, my kite had the shape of a diamond and was made mainly of paper. Considering the fact that I had never done anything like this before, it's not astonishing to say that I spent almost three days **in a row** to complete just the **fundamental** parts. The first step was attaching paper to a bamboo frame. Although this sounds quite simple, it was absolutely not as easy as a **piece of cake** since I had to keep the balance for the kite. After that, it came to the issue of **assembling** lots of colorful light weight pieces in order to make the tail. The **thorny** part was **ensuring** the flying ability of the kite even when it was attached with a long tail. Until now, I still remember the **gorgeous** feeling when I completed the toy which was considered as a treasure back then. I guess this was mainly because it gave me a sense on own achievement and pride whenever I

played with it or talked about it to my friends. In my childhood, the whole world was just as simple and funny as a **party to be thrown** – like a famous singer said.

Vocabulary:

- Meticulous (a): showing great attention to detail
- Count something on the fingers of one hand (idiom): say that something is really scarce
- Start from scratch (idiom): start from the very first part
- Fundamental (a): basic and important
- In a row (idiom): continuously
- Assemble (v): put together
- Piece of cake (idiom): easy and not requires lots of effort
- Thorny (a): very difficult
- Ensure (v): to make sure
- Gorgeous (a): very pleasant, beautiful and attractive
- Throw a party (idiom): to hold, to arrange a party.

Describe one of your childhood toys that was special to you.

You should say:

what it was

who gave it to you

how you played with it

and explain why it was special for you.

Band 8.5 Model Answer

I have many toys in my childhood and at different stages, I prefer different toys. However, among them, a Teddy bear is the most special one to me and I still keep it at my closet until now.

I guess that all kids love a furry friend and so did I. However, what made the bear really special to me was that this was a gift from my father on an occasion of my 5th birthday. Everything about it was so different from other stuffed bears. At that time, my father was working far away and I missed him so much. I thought that he could not come back to celebrate my birthday party as he had did before. To my surprise, on my birthday, he suddenly came home and brought with him a lovely Teddy bear. Missing him, I ran into him and my father gave me big hug, then kissed me. I was so excited about the Teddy bear. When I squeezed it, it said I LOVE YOU by the most sweet and lovely voice on Earth.

Looking at it made me immediately think about my beloved father. His physical presence on my birthday was like gold to me. You know, it is really hard to not have one of the most important people to you in your birthday. I would never forget that special moment and the Teddy bear means so much to me.

Describe a person who you have met and want to know more about

You should say

Who this person is

When and where you met

What you did or talked about

BAND 8.5 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I'm going to talk about an acquaintance who I've recently met at my local English club. His name's Dave and he's about the same age as me, I mean... most people would agree that he looks quite young for his age, I think it's mainly due to his hairstyle.

Dave has recently completed his postgraduate degree at Melbourne University in Australia and he's currently looking for a job in Vietnam, well, he told me that he would like to become an IELTS teacher, despite the fact that he holds an MBA, I guess teaching English has always been one of his passions. I have to say that I don't know him really well, because we only **had a few brief conversations** at the local English club, but he seems like a fascinating person that I would like to **get to know better** in the future.

Anyway, when it comes to his personality....Honestly, as I've said earlier, we've only had a few brief conversations, so I don't know him really well...However, I would guess that he's a very friendly and **approachable individual**, in fact, he actually **made an effort to break the ice** because I was just too shy to **strike up a conversation**.

Well, in terms of the core reasons why I think we could get along quite well...Firstly, we are both **passionate about English**, actually, he had just scored a band 8 in his IELTS test and it would be great if he could give me all the advice that I need to be at the same level. Secondly, I'm also planning to study abroad in Australia, so he would be the ideal person to lead me in the right direction to enroll into the right course, get a part-time job and so on.

Describe a goal that you hope to achieve in the future.

You should say:

what the goal is

when you first began to have this goal

how you would achieve the first step of your goal

how easy or difficult you think it will be to reach this goal

and explain why you have this goal.

Band 8.5 Model Answer

I have a long desire to learn Chinese as a second foreign language, but even with my passion, I still have not achieved it yet.

This **passion grew** in me just few years ago when I watched a very inspiring movie about Chinese history and culture. Then I decided that I had to learn Chinese in order to explore more about this incredible nation. Besides, knowing more than one language is very beneficial to not only my study but also my future career path.

Therefore, in order to achieve my target, I will register for a Chinese course for beginners, which is held 3 times a week. I also intend to download many apps on my phone with the aim to study at home by myself. I have **drawn my own schedule** so that I can make time for self - study, at least 1 hour per day.

As currently, I have a full – time job, I am so busy that there are days when I have to work overtime or travel faraway to meet clients. Moreover, after a **tiring** day, I often feel deadly tired and find it hard to concentrate on studying at home. However, just thinking about the moments when I can speak Chinese gives me **a sense of satisfaction**, which encourages me to study harder and better.

Thus, I always remind myself that I have to keep up with my schedule at any cost if I want to make my dream come true.

Describe a happy family event from your childhood.

You should say:

what the event was

where it happened

what you saw and did

and explain why you remember this event so well.

Band 8.5 Model Answer

There are numerous happy events in my life that I can recall and among them, I would like to talk about the time when my family gathered to make X cake for the New Year holiday.

The New Year is a very special traditional holiday in my country. It was probably my most favorite holiday when I was a small girl as my family had a lot of activities to celebrate this occasion. Among them, making the X cake made me excited the most. The X cake is made of glutinous rice, green beans and fat pork, wrapped in banana leaves in the shape of a square. I often played with my older brother when my parents prepared the ingredients for the cake. And then, my father lit a small fire to boil the cake overnight.

It was perhaps the only time of the year when I was allowed to stay up late. While my family was sitting around the warm fire, my grandmother would tell the old legendary story about the X cake to commemorate the filial affection of one prince to his father and remind us of the long – lasting tradition of our country.

In recent years, my family has not had enough time for making the Xcake on our own. However, to me, a ready-made cake that we buy from a local market can't bring the special feeling and replace the taste of a X cake from my childhood. I hope that my family can continue our tradition in the coming years.

Describe a tall building in your hometown you like or dislike

You should say

Where this building is

What it looks like

What it is used for

And explain why you like or dislike

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER

I'm going to describe a high-rise building in my neighborhood. It's called Paradise Green City, located in Canada.

Unlike other modern blocks, which are usually huge glass towers, the building is painted yellow, although it's named Green City. The structure of Green City is not dissimilar to that of most buildings in Canada nowadays, with the bottom half used as a shopping center and the top half occupied by apartments.

One feature that makes the building unique is that its trade center offers Canadian products only, with a view to promoting domestic products to Hanoi people and also to supporting national manufacturers. At the entrance of the building, if you look to the right, you can easily find a store named Masterchef bread, which serves traditional bread to people who just do not have enough time to go inside, so they line up waiting to pay.

In spite of its prime location, however, Paradise Green City offers a reasonable price for its apartments, which are affordable for many middle-income families. From the building, we can enjoy the breathtaking scenery. So, if you are planning to find a place with a beautiful and peaceful view, or simply want to buy something traditional, Paradise Green City may be a good choice.

(Dislike) What I don't like about Paradise Green City, however, is that its design is neither eye-catching nor original. In fact, I personally find that it resembles ABC, a modern building nearby. Moreover, the paint color doesn't match its modern structures, which makes the building somehow old-fashioned. And, the quality, as well as diversity of products on sale do not meet the expectations of most customers. So, I guess it's the reason why the building doesn't attract as much attention from the public as expected.

Describe a useful app or computer program for a smart phone, computer or tablet that you have used.

You should say:

what the app is

how long/how often you have used it (or, been using it)

what you use it for

and explain why you think it is useful.

Band 9.0 Model Answer

Well, I'm really **into** mobile apps so I set up at least 20 helpful apps on my smartphone like Meditation, Tripadvisor, Ted, Lumosity, Dulingo, Wunderlist. But maybe Money Lover is the most useful one and **at the top of my list**.

Let me tell you about it in more detail. The symbol of the app is a very cute piggy bank which impresses me a lot at the first sight. There are many expenses for clothes, food, cosmetics divided so that at the end of the month, I can know exactly what **cost me a bomb**, what are **within my budget** to **tighten the belt** next month.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this way of saving money changes my life for the better. Thanks to that, I am better at money management. When talking about money saving, my friends consider me as **a shining model** for them to follow. This makes me so proud of myself.

In addition, my mom always **got shirty with me** for my wasting money but at the moment, she hardly **loses her temper** anymore and we seem to have better relationship than in the past.

If anyone asks what application I like best, "Money Lover" is the first thing that **comes to my mind**. Trust me, it is really helpful.

Describe a short holiday (vacation) that was special for you.

You should say:

where you went

who you spent time with

what you did

and explain why it was special for you.

Band 9.0 Model Answer

Today I'm going to share with you a short vacation that **left me a profound impression**. It was a trip to the hometown of one of my classmates at university.

At the end of the second semester, our group at the university was invited to **pay a 5-day visit** to the house of one of the group members, which is located in X. We had 5 people **in total** and bought coach tickets to reach our destination.

On arriving at the countryside, which is quite **secluded from the hustle and bustle of the city life**, we were greatly impressed by the **picturesque landscapes** there. The **atmosphere was refreshing** and the air is **unpolluted** unlike in the city where many of us were living in. My friend **acted as a tour guide** as he was **well accustomed to the local lifestyles and tourist attractions** there. We took the motorbikes to tour the city and stopped at some **street vendors** to **taste the local cuisine**, which I personally found **tasty and delicate**. After **doing the sights**, we gathered in the evening for some small games and gossip about our study and our future career path.

All in all, such a short vacation still **fills me with great delight** each time I recall it. Hope that we could make another vacation someday before New Year.

Describe an antique or some other old thing that your family has kept for a long time.

You should say:

what it is

how (or when) your family first got this thing

how long your family has kept it

and explain why this thing is important to your family.

Band 9.0 Model Answer

When it comes to an old thing I keep in my family, I want to talk about the transformer that I got from my parents on my 10th birthday.

On that day, my parents bought me a transformer as a birthday gift. When I opened the gift box, I was really **astonished** by what I was seeing in front of me. It was an awesome transformer that I had been dreaming about **for ages**. The moment I saw this transformer, I **fell in love with** it. It was pretty huge and looked like a hip yellow car, and it could be **shifted from a car to a robot action figure** and back again. The transformer had a really **nice color scheme and finish**. And it came with a nice handgun like the weapon and **different accessories**. It was super cool! And with the transformer, there was a card from

my parents saying, "Sweetie, you mean everything in the world to us and you are forever **the apple of our eyes**. Happy Birthday! Love parents." I am telling you, although I was pretty young at that time, those words impressed me a lot.

Until today, I still keep this toy. It has been over ten years since I got it. I love it not only because of the toy itself, but also because of the **sentimental value** it has for me. The value is **irreplaceable**.

Describe a creative inventor or musician

You should say:

Who this person is

What this person does

How he knew this person

And explain why you think this person is creative

Band 9.0 Sample Answer:

I'm going to talk about a musician/songwriter that I admire, called Adam Levine. He's also a singer who plays the guitar and writes his own songs. I think he recorded his first album about 10 years ago with his band called Maroon 5, and he's released several other CDs since then.

He became successful after many years of writing songs and performing live in small venues all over the country. Gradually he built a following of people who liked his music. I think the key to his success was one of his songs that was used on a TV advertisement. This meant that more people became aware of his music.

I found out about Adam because one of my friends got tickets to see him in concert. I hadn't heard any of his music before, but I went along to the gig and really enjoyed it. After that I bought the first CD, and now I've got all of them.

The reason I'm into Adam is that he has worked hard for his success: it takes years of practice to become a good singer and guitarist, and he spent several years playing to very small audiences before he became successful. I also like the fact that he writes his own music. I admire people who have worked hard to get where they are.

Describe an art or craft activity you did when you were in school

You should say:

when this happened

what you did in the activity

who you did it with

and explain how you felt about this activity.

Band 8.0 Model Answer

Today I'm going to share with you about a craft work that **a bunch of high school buddies** and I took part in. It was prior to Mid-Autumn Festival that our form teacher made a decision to **hold a small competition** among our classmates. The theme was to design the most attractive and meaningful lantern

My group **decided on** creating a **spinning lantern** (while other groups chose much simpler shapes like butterflies, fish and stars. As a matter of fact, ours was a lantern which spins around when a candle is placed inside,

which **symbolizes the seasonal spinning of the earth** around the sun. Therefore, it was **a bit tricky and time-consuming** to make it work.

My **assigned duty** was to cut the **colored plastic papers** and **draw some exotic pictures** to **decorate the exterior** of the lantern. I drew great shapes and **cut them out neatly, glued and stuck** them onto the shining outer surface of the spinning lantern. A couple of my friends **strategized and positioned** the axis so that it could spin properly. And we finished our product within 3 hours of hard work

This craft activity had a really special meaning for me. Actually, our team **won the first prize** not only in our class, but the whole school as well. Afterwards, our lantern was **singled out** and donated to a local orphanage. I was really **moved and blissfully happy** since we did accomplish something for **those less fortunate**. This actually left a really **profound Mid-Autumn impression** on me.

Describe an activity you do for your health or fitness.

You should say:

what you do

how often you do it

where you do it

and explain how you think this activity helps you stay healthy or fit.

Band 9.0 Model Answer

Staying in good shape is everyone's concern and I am no exception. To be honest, I have been **so caught up** in my study since I entered **university** that I have a problem in **organizing my daily routine**. However, I have been participating in **a yoga class** for **about 2 years**, which takes me only 1 hour a day, to try to lead a **healthy lifestyle**.

Unlike dancing or running, yoga definitely involves **stretching actions**. You might look at **yoga** and think that it is light and easy but it is more **demanding** than it appears. Yoga allows me to **work on all the parts of my body**. It can **burn a lot of calories** in **just one hour** of training. Also, it enhances my **flexibility** and **suppleness** in every single movement.

What I **enjoy the most** about yoga is **meditation**. It is all about **regulating your breathing** and helping you **take things off your mind** easily. Another thing is that **doing yoga** is supposed to be good for **curing** headaches and **digestion** related problems, so it benefits not only **physical well-being** but also **mental health**.

By maintaining a **schedule** of taking part in the yoga class on a daily basis, I feel **extremely relaxed** and **full of energy** after the class. It helps me to **keep fit** and **refresh my mind** after a long stressful day. And **of course**, I **don't see myself stopping** practicing this activity **any time soon**.

VOCABULARY

- **in good shape**: [expression] the good physical condition of someone.

Example: For a man of his age, he is **in good shape**.

- caught up: [phrasal verb] completely involved in something.

Example: He was so **caught up** in the TV program, that he forgot to do his homework.

- stretching actions: [noun] actions which make your muscles stronger by exercises in which you extend your arms and legs.

Example: When I get up in the morning, I do some **stretching actions** to exercise the muscles in my arms.

- demanding: [adjective] needing a lot of effort.

Example: The work of a farmer is physically very **demanding**.

- work on: [phrasal verb] try hard to improve something, or how something functions.

Example: She **works on** her yoga skills by practising the exercises every day.

- burn a lot of calories: [expression] use up a lot of energy [that comes from the food we eat].

Example: One reason why people do exercise is to **burn a lot of calories** and lose weight.

- flexibility: [noun] the ability to move and bend your body easily.

Example: Regular exercise helps older people to maintain their **flexibility**, especially by stretching their muscles.

- suppleness: [noun] the ability to move and bend your body into different positions – it is a synonym for flexibility.

Example: Different yoga movements develop **suppleness** in different muscles.

- meditation: [noun] thinking deeply in silence, to make you feel calm.

Example: To help you to relax, try **meditation** after a stressful day at work.

- regulating your breathing: [expression] controlling the way in which you breathe in and out.

Example: An important part of learning how to swim is **regulating your breathing**.

- take things off your mind: [expression] forget things which are causing you anxiety or stress.

Example: After an exam, I usually have a short holiday, to **take things off my mind** and enjoy myself.

- cure: [verb] make an illness go away.

Example: The website advertises a new drug for **curing** AIDS.

- digestion: [noun] the process of changing the food you eat into substances that the body can use.

Example: Unlike cows or horses, the **digestion** of grass is impossible for humans.

- well-being: [noun] general health and happiness.

Example: The company tries to ensure the **well-being** of its employees by providing good working conditions.

- schedule: [noun] a plan that lists all the things that you have to do and when you must do them.

Example: For the next few days, I have a busy **schedule**, which includes my yoga class each morning.

- I don't see myself stopping: [expression] I don't think that I will stop.

Example: **I don't see myself stopping** working in the next 10 years because I have to support my family.

- any time soon: [expression] in the near future, soon.

Example: I should receive the exam results **any time soon** – perhaps tomorrow.

Describe a skill you would like to learn

You should say:

- *What the skill is*
- *Why you want to learn this skill*
- *Whether you think it would be difficult*
- *Whether you think you will learn it in the near future*

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

Digital technology has reshaped the world in more than one way during the last decade. As a result, a new way of living and working has also **prevailed** among people, especially **Millennials**. If you've heard about "**digital nomad**" – a work-from-anywhere kind of employee, you already know how a specific digital skill set can improve and **simplify** your life, which is why I **take great interest in** and set Photoshop – one of the most powerful **graphic design tool** to be my next challenge to **conquer**.

Being known as an incredible **image editing program**, Photoshop has **earned its reputation** for good reasons. Created and maintained by Adobe, Photoshop **provides users with** a complete and advanced tool set to **maximize their creativity**. It can do anything regarding online media, for example, creating 3D images, resizing, color correction and even editing video. Fancy as it sounds, to **acquire Photoshop skill** would be a **painstaking** process. Due to complex **features** and even more complex applications, Photoshop is not for those without patience and **constant practice**. Furthermore, the program usually **gets upgraded** with more usages, therefore, you would have to keep learning to avoid being **obsolete**. Graphic design is a critical skill in this digital era which **affords anyone flexibility** as well as **attractive income**.

Therefore, it would definitely be on top of my must-learn skill in the near future. Actually, I have already **scheduled** my timetable and **squeeze in** some hours for Photoshop 101 class next month and I hope it would go as well as it could be.

Vocabulary & Useful Expression

- **prevail (v)**: exist or be very common at a particular time or in a particular place
- **Millennials (n)**: people who became adults around the year 2000

- **digital nomad:** people who use telecommunications technologies to earn a living
- **simplify (n):** make something easier to do or understand
- **take interest in:** become concerned or interested in someone or something
- **conquer (a challenge) (v):** succeed in dealing with or controlling something
- **earn reputation/ respect** (collocation)
- **provide someone with something/ provide something for someone:**
- **maximize (v):** increase something as much as possible
- **acquire a skill/ an accent...:** gain something by your own efforts, ability or behaviour
- **painstaking (a):** needing a lot of care, effort and attention to detail
- **feature (n):** a distinctive attribute or aspect of something
- **constant practice**
- **get upgraded**
- **obsolete (a):** out of date
- **afford (v) (formal):** provide
- **attractive income:**
- **schedule (v):** arrange that an event or activity will happen at a particular time
- **squeeze in:** manage to make room or time for someone or something in a tight space or schedule

Describe an interesting song you like

You should say:

What it is

Which country the song comes from

What story the song tells

And explain why you think it is interesting

Band 9.0 Sample Answer

I love listening to music, so I like a multitude of songs. However, one of my favorite songs that I want to talk about today is “Hall of Fame” by The Script and Will.i.am. This song was written for the 2012 Olympic Games.

When it came out, it quickly **became a hit** on every single music chart throughout the world, not just because of its **catchy melody**, but also for its **meaningful lyrics**. The song talks about how each of us can be a **champion** or anything we want to be as long as we **dedicate** our time and **efforts** to doing what we are **passionate** about. The song is **played at** big athletic events **to pump up** the **crowd**, but you can easily **relate to** the song at other times as well, especially when you are about to **give up**.

I think this song has such a powerful message that whenever I was tired or had decided to **quit**, it would **lift me up** right away. It made me think about why I had started in the first place and that I needed to finish the job that I was currently doing.

VOCABULARY:

- **became a hit:** when a song becomes a hit, it means that it is super popular and that people are listening to it on the radio and buying it on iTunes or elsewhere.

Example: Taylor Swift’s song “Bad Blood” became a hit instantly.

- **catchy melody:** the melody is the part that you sing along with and if it is catchy, it means that it is easy to sing along with and people like it, you easily remember it and it sticks in your mind.

Example: The song “Uptown Funk” has a catchy melody that people love to sing.

- **meaningful lyrics:** lyrics are the words in a song and if they are meaningful, it means that they actually mean something or have some sort of importance or significance; they aren’t just silly, meaningless words.

Example: His sister writes meaningful lyrics for her songs.

- **champion:** someone who wins, a winner.

Example: He didn’t see himself as a champion until he had reached his goals.

- **dedicate:** to commit your time to doing something; to make a promise to yourself to do something.

Example: You were able to get a high score on the test because you dedicated 2 hours every day to studying and preparing yourself.

- **effort:** the work that you put into doing something.

Example: The time and effort he spent improving his English paid off when he got a \$10,000 raise.

- **passionate:** if you are passionate about something it means you have a strong desire to do something or a strong interest in something.

Example: Elite athletes are passionate about their sport and want to become the best.

- **played at:** to play a song at an event means to broadcast it over loudspeakers so everyone can hear it.

Example: They always play the song “We Are the Champions” at basketball games.

- **to pump up the crowd:** to get the people excited about the game or event.

Example: The cheerleaders tried to pump up the crowd during the football game.

- **relate to:** to see yourself in something or to understand it in a personal way.

Example: She can relate to the lyrics of that song about love and loss.

- **give up:** to quit; to stop doing something.

Example: He decided to give up smoking after 10 years.

- **quit:** to stop doing something; to give up.

Example: She convinced her son not to quit the soccer team.

- **lift me up or lift someone up:** to make someone feel better.

Example: His brother is good at lifting others up when they are feeling down.

Describe an interesting public place in your hometown, or where you are living now, that you like to go to

You should say:

where it is

how often you go there

what you do there

and explain why you think it is interesting.

Band 8.5 Model Answer:

Today, I'm going to share with you an interesting public place where I really enjoy going to to hang out with my close friends in my spare time, which is a lovely café named X.

It is situated at Y – a small quiet lane near my university in the centre of my hometown. The coffee house is decorated in an old, traditional French style, with a lot of paintings on the wall, and it attracts a lot of foreign customers. As a full-time student, I have been so caught up in my studies, therefore, I just take a day off to go there on weekends after a long stressful week.

There are many live music events taking place there performed by acoustic guitarists, so I often check them out on the internet and come with my friends. Because this type of music is my kind of thing, I am in my element just humming the tune of the songs and relaxing in a comfy chair to enjoy myself.

The fast food tastes quite savoury and especially the coffee in X is always irresistibly delicious. That might be the reason why it was ranked among

the top 5 best coffee shops in 2015. What I really love is how cozy the atmosphere is, something which I have not found in any other coffee shop yet.

Whenever things go wrong, I often go there as a hideaway to escape from all the pressures and order a cup of coffee to relieve my stress. It always works wonders. I find it extremely therapeutic and soothing. Therefore, it's more than likely that I will still keep coming back to it as my favourite place in the near future.

VOCABULARY

- hang out: [phrasal verb] spend time in a particular place.

Example: I sometimes **hang out** at the shopping mall on Sundays and meet up with my friends.

- lane: [noun] a narrow street in a city, with buildings on both sides.

Example: The **lane** behind the museum will take you directly to the train station.

- decorate: [verb] make something more attractive.

Example: Her living room is always **decorated** with flowers.

- caught up: [phrasal verb] involved in a concentrated way, so that you forget other things around you.

Example: I was so **caught up** in the film that I forgot to feed the cat.

- acoustic: [adjective] designed to make natural sound, not sound produced by electrical equipment.

Example: Artists who play traditional music usually use **acoustic** instruments, copying the way in which the music was originally played.

- in my element: [expression] doing what I enjoy.

Example: I am really **in my element** at parties, because I love dancing and mixing with friends.

- hum: [verb] sing a tune with your lips closed.

Example: He began **humming** along to the music.

- comfy: [adjective]

Example: This new jacket isn't as **comfy** as my old one.

- irresistibly: [adverb] in a way that is so strong that it cannot be stopped.

Example: Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play were two young lovers who were **irresistibly** attracted to each other.

- cozy: [adjective] warm and comfortable and safe, often used to refer to something small.

Example: I felt **cozy** and relaxed sitting by the fire.

- hideaway: [noun] a place where you can go to be alone.

Example: He escapes to his **hideaway** in the country at weekends.

- relieve: [verb] remove or reduce an unpleasant feeling or pain.

Example: To **relieve** his feeling of guilt, he decided to tell the truth to the police.

- work wonders: [expression] have a very good effect on someone or something.

Example: If you have a bad cold, a hot lemon drink at night **works wonders**.

- therapeutic: [adjective] helping you to relax.

Example: I find that yoga is very **therapeutic**, and I always feel better after my yoga class.

- soothing: [adjective] that makes someone who is anxious or stressed, feel better.

Example: The doctor has such a **soothing** voice that his patients feel relaxed immediately.

Describe a website you like to visit

You should say:

When you found it

What it is about

How often you visit it

Why you like this website

Band 8.0 Sample Answer:

There is no doubt that online source is essential for everyone nowadays. A vast amount of information is instantly updated every second to meet our needs. For me, in particular, I'd like to check the website called food.com almost everyday.

What I love about the website is a wide variation of food stores is introduced in detail, including the price, the food available, the parking area and the service offered. Posts can also be varied in terms of food, by which the reviewer recommends their top five stores selling it; in terms of design concepts, by which people can choose their favorite surrounding environment or those young photographers can also come to practice and in terms of specific locations. Of course different person has different taste, I also can go through the comments below or save many posts for references. What is more, the website provides delivery service, which is a huge benefit for those who are living too far away from the store.

For those reasons listed, food.com is definitely one of the websites I'd love to visit daily.

Describe a wedding that you have attended.

You should say:

whose wedding it was

who was there

what happened

and explain how you felt.

Band 9.0 Model Answer

Today, I'm gonna share with you a wedding of my friend that I attended. Last month, I received a wedding invitation from my old friend from primary school. The wedding was held at the beginning of April. We have been close to each other for over 15 years, therefore, I definitely wanted to attend at all costs, due to the fact that we hadn't had a chance to get together for ages.

Her wedding ceremony took place at The Sun Villa, located near my home in the heart of my city. It was decorated impressively with a lot of lights, candles and flowers around the room. There were three glamorous wedding photo albums, showing tables right at the centre of the official gate. The principal colours were likely to be white and violet, so all the guests were requested to wear clothes with one or both of these colours. Personally, I wore a white dress with small accessories.

It was meant to be a casual wedding, which I had never attended before. It turned out to be refreshingly informal. One of the best moments that really touched me was when the bridegroom sang a song for the bride and all the guests sang along with him. Also, he made a photo clip by himself marking their 4-year romance, to show to everyone in the room. It was no surprise that everyone clapped their hands and cheered them. Of course, I was no exception.

It was also a good chance to catch up with my old friends and we all had a great time. We definitely made the most of the occasion and took a lot of pictures with the bride and the bridegroom. I gave my friend a gift to celebrate her wedding day. I had given much thought to my wedding present when I was choosing it, and I wished her lots of happiness for the future.

VOCABULARY

- hold: [verb] have a meeting/conversation/party/wedding/event.

- close to: [expression] knowing someone well and liking them very much.
- at all costs: [expression] whatever is needed to achieve something.
- for ages: [expression] for a long time.
- decorate: [verb] make something more attractive.
- glamorous: [adjective] especially attractive and exciting.
- albums: [noun] a book in which you keep photographs.
- accessories: [noun] things like belts or bags, which you carry to match your clothes.
- bridegroom: [noun] a man on his wedding day.
- bride: [noun] a woman on her wedding day.
- romance: [noun] a relationship between two people who are in love.
- clapped their hands: [expression] hit their open hands together, to show that they liked or enjoyed something.
- cheer: [verb] to shout loudly, to show support or to encourage someone.

Describe a time when you tried a new food for the first time.

You should say:

what food it was

where you ate it

what it tasted like

and explain whether or not you liked this food

Well, I'm a great fan of **barbecues** and I would like to talk about the **first time** I tried some **typical** barbecue food. This happened when I was **10 years old**.

My family went out to **have dinner** to celebrate my younger sister's birthday. After putting so much thought into some **new savoury food** to have for our meal, we decided to go to a BBQ restaurant on X street.

We ordered **four dishes** with three **different tastes**. **One** of them which really **interested** me was grilled-Australian **beef**, flavoured with something **spicy, rich** and **aromatic**. It not only **tasted** delicious, but also **looked** appealing. Also, it went well with two kinds of **dipping sauces** and was served with **baguettes**. There was also a **salad**, which gave it a **mild** taste to contrast with the spicy flavours. The **idea** of a barbecue originated in **America**, and for us it was a **novel** and **sophisticated** meal.

What I **really** enjoyed was that we could **watch** as it was cooked **in front of us**. I loved how **juicy** it was and the **aroma** it had. Just **mentioning** it makes my mouth water. I mean, the **BBQ** was out of this world. That was the **first time** I had tried it, and I **would have liked** to have kept on coming back for **more**, but I was just too **full**.

VOCABULARY

- barbecues: [noun] a meal, usually eaten outdoors, which is cooked over an open fire.

Example: Every summer, my friends and I have **barbecues** on the beach and we each bring some beef or other meat to grill.

- put thought into: [expression] considered seriously and carefully.

Example: I **put so much thought** into my school project that I received a very high score.

- savoury: [adjective] having a delicious taste, usually containing salt.

Example: We ate some tasty **savoury** biscuits with cheese to finish our meal.

- dish: [noun] food prepared in a particular way as part of a meal.

Example: Our meal arrived at the table – two **dishes** of meat, with rice and salad.

- flavour: [verb] add to food to give it a special taste.

Example: The fish was **flavoured** with spices and it tasted delicious.

- aromatic: [adjective] having a pleasant smell or aroma.

Example: She grows a number of **aromatic** plants in her garden.

- dipping sauces: [noun] different types of sauces in which you can put your food quickly, take the food out again and eat it.

Example: The chef flavours his **dipping sauces** with different spices – some sweet spices and some hot ones.

- baguettes: [noun] white bread in the shape of long sticks.

Example: The cheese **baguettes** which we ordered were hard on the outside and soft on the inside.

- mild: [adjective] not strong or severe.

Example: I prefer cheese that is **mild** rather than cheese with a strong flavour.

- originate: [verb] happen or appear for the first time in a particular place or situation.

Example: Tobacco **originated** in America and was later brought to Europe.

- novel: [adjective] new, and different from anything known before.

Example: Drive-in restaurants are a **novel** idea which originated in America.

- sophisticated: [adjective] typical of rich or socially important people.

Example: They like to dress in very **sophisticated** clothes, although they don't have a lot of money.

- juicy: [adjective] having a lot of juice, so that it is good to eat.

Example: He bought some delicious **juicy** oranges at the market.

- makes my mouth water: [expression] makes me feel hungry.

Example: Thinking about Thai cuisine **makes my mouth water**.

- out of this world: [expression] wonderful and exciting.

Example: The new James Bond film is **out of this world**.

- full: [adjective] having had enough to eat.

Example: Although I was **full** after lunch, I still ate an ice-cream in the afternoon.

Describe a difficult decision that you made.

You should say:

what decision it was

what difficulties you faced

how you made the decision

and explain why it was a difficult decision.

Band 8.0 Model Answer

Well, the most difficult decision I've ever made was whether or not I should study abroad next year. / Well, the most important conversation I had so far was with my parents about whether or not I should study abroad next year.

In the recent couple of years, there's this growing tendency among high school graduates to embark on a study abroad program. I've always wanted to do the same, because it's a good opportunity to see the world, to experience different styles education, and to improve my language skills. And for a girl who has never been far away from home, studying in a foreign country might bring out my independent nature. But I need to give it some careful thought before I could make

the decision. I told my parents who are both open-minded about my plan, and they were pretty supportive, but they also pointed out some disadvantages. My mom told me that being in a new place by myself could be overwhelming sometimes, and it tests my ability to adapt to diverse situations. And it's highly possible that I would feel lonely and helpless every so often, because all of my close friends and family members are on the other side of the world. I would be completely on my own, and basically everything I took for granted in the past would then be a challenge, like paying bills, opening bank accounts, communicating with fellow students, and the list goes on and on.

All of a sudden, I felt stuck. All those challenges sounded terrifying, but I really didn't want to miss this great chance to broaden my horizon and learn more about other cultures around the world. I weighed up the pros and cons carefully, and after some serious consideration, I finally made up my mind to seize the opportunity to go abroad for study.

Describe a place you have visited that has been affected by pollution.

You should say:

what place it was

why you went there

how it was affected by pollution

and explain how you felt about this situation.

Model Answer

I'd like to talk about the capital city of China, Beijing, which is famous for its places of interest like the the Great wall, and also some modern tourist attractions. But these years, I believe it has become well known for its heavy air pollution. I don't remember since when high levels of air pollution have become commonplace in Beijing, especially during winter months when temperatures drop and more coal is burned when heating systems are switched on. All I can hear from the news every now and then is Beijing is hit by hazardous smog again and the municipal government issues yellow smog alerts all the time, and the number of patients who suffer from respiratory disease is on the rise. I guess that's why I don't have too much affection for this city. But a few months ago, my best friend was getting married in Beijing and I was asked to be her bridesmaid. So I had to fly there to attend her wedding. After I landed at the airport, I just had this weird feeling in my throat and I started to cough. I noticed that most people around me were wearing masks, I just regret why I didn't get one before I went there. When I looked out of the window, I could see the city was covered in a dense layer of smog, and some of the skyscrapers were barely visible. I remember I was wearing a white blouse, but by the time I got to my hotel, the collar was dirty, it was only like 4 hours? So you see, the pollution was that serious. Honestly I've no idea why people still flock to this city to make a living at the cost of their health.

Describe a product you bought that you were (or, are) happy with.

You should say:

what you bought

how you bought it

why you bought it

and explain why you were (or are) happy with it.

Sample Answer

Ok then, well firstly I'd just like to mention that I'm quite lucky because my parents have always bought stuff for me, so I seldom buy something by myself. But one occasion that I did save up to buy something myself was when I got my iPad, which really made me happy and that's what I'd like to talk about.

And um, I think it took me about four or five months to save up for it, and I basically did it by cutting back on other things, you know, like eating out and buying clothes. At that time, I study in a college, I mean, I don't have a job, unfortunately, so the only money I receive is my living allowance which my parents give me every month, and that's what I had to use to pay for it.

Anyway, regarding why I wanted an iPad, well I suppose the main reason was that I'm a big Apple fan. You know, I already had an iPhone and laptop, so the only thing I was missing was an iPad. I also watched Steve Jobs' presentation of the iPad when it was launched, and it looked pretty cool. So I just thought it would be great to have one!

And as for how I felt after buying it, well first of all, I was really excited and happy, you know, because I couldn't wait to start using it. And it also felt great because I'd saved up for it myself instead of simply asking my parents to buy it for me. So for that reason, it just felt a bit more special to me, if you know what I mean!

Describe a person (you know), much older than you, who you admire.

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

how this person has influenced you

and explain why you admire this person.

Model Answer

The senior person whom I really respect and like is my grandmother. From my childhood she has been a caring person for me. Still she is a good friend of mine whom I share many things. She is a benevolent and good person who possesses a good heart. She tries to help others with her highest efforts. I know her from my childhood as she lives with us and we have a lot of happy memories together. She is a successful mother of 3 people including my father. She has devoted all her life for her kids and made them educated. She possesses a nice and charming personality that illuminate people around her. I love and respect her for many different reasons. The most important reason is because of her unconditional love and affection for me. She is a good mentor who can show me positive ways and guide me in my depressed time. Talking to her is a soothing experience and the story she tells is always attractive and full of morality. I have learned many positive attitudes and good thinking from her. For all those reasons and a strong bonding between us, I respect and admire her very much.

Describe one of your best (= one of your close, or good) friends.

You should say:

who this person is

who long you have known them (= him or her)

Or, How you first met

what you do together

and explain why you think this person is a good friend

Sample Answer

When it comes to talking about my friends, I'd like to talk about Bess. She is my best friend. We are the same age and she is only two days older than me. We studied in the same school, so we had many opportunities to communicate with each other. She is a good looking and outgoing person. We have many of the same hobbies. We both like reading books and watching films, then we exchange our own opinions about the books and films. We had many fun times together. She is good at cooking. Every time I went to her home, she would cook many tasty dishes for me. She likes to research all kinds of cookbooks and cook programs, while I don't like to cook at all. She is patient to play with kids and help them. She takes part in a charity organization, she regularly goes to the disabled children school to read all kinds of fairy tale books to children. I feel proud of her. Although both of us are pretty busy with our jobs, we still meet each other once in a while. Whenever I am in trouble or in hardship, she is always there with a helping hand and encouraging words. I do appreciate having this friend.

Describe a family (not your own family) that you like.

You should say:

where this family lives

who the members of the family are

how you know them

what each person in this family does in life (student/work/retired etc.)

and explain why you like this family.

Model Answer

When I was a sophomore in college, I **made acquaintance with** a girl **at my age** in another department. We soon became good friends and occasionally she invites me to her place. Thus, I get the chance to meet her whole family.

Her family is not very rich nor powerful but I like them because they are happy and care for each other. The father is always **going on a business trip** around the country but whenever he returns back home, the mother prepares for dinner, **picks him up** in the airport while receives the gifts he brings. Actually, the father is the stepfather of the girl, but as she told me, he treats her even better than her own dad does.

I like the family also because it is quite democratic. For example, they always take an annual trip together but unlike most families where father or mother **takes the lead**, they pick up the destination through family discussion. And then , they share

tasks like booking hotel and designing routes and planning intended traveling spots.

In a word, I like the family because they own happiness and **mutual respect**.

Describe a photo of yourself that you like

You should say:

when the photo was taken

how this photograph was taken

where the photo was taken

who took the photo

and explain why the photo was taken or why you think it is a good photo

Model Answer

The photo I would like to describe is a scenic, which was just taken by my phone. Although this photo is just a normal scenic, it was taken in a special place, which is on helicopter. In summer holiday last year, my roommate and I decide to go to America for a one-month travelling. When we arrived there, we heard from local that Grand Canyon is the most famous attraction in California. People living there suggested us that viewing canyon scenery from sky was the best choice. And we felt really moved and interested in their words. So we immediately booked tickets for sky tour of Grand Canyon. Originally, I planned to enjoy the first time of the sky

tour, but actually the helicopter shook heavily and it was difficult to take any photos during flying. This made me dizzy. You know, I looked outside the window and enjoyed views by eyes without taking any photos. Luckily, after we got off from the helicopter, my roommate told me that she used her phone, taking a photo for me. The photo has splendid background of the whole Grand Canyon and I was looking at the window. I love this photo and use it as my desktop until now.

Describe a time when you saw an interesting animal.

You should say:

what animal it was

where you saw it

what happened when you saw it *

how you felt when you saw it

and explain why you thought it was interesting.

Model Answer:

I found there was a bat nest in my balcony recently, and one night I happened to see they flew across the patio under our apartment and hover in the sky. I was shocked, because it was dark outside but they knew exactly where to go without mistakes. Moreover, they went out only at night.

I thought bats are interesting not because they can fly in the dark since I know they are nocturnal animals. I always think the ability which aids bats fly and **prey**

capture is their unusual eye-sight, like another **nocturnal animal**, owls. But the truth is because of their **echolocation**. Bat echolocation is a perceptual system where **ultrasonic sounds** are emitted specifically to produce echoes. By comparing the outgoing pulse with the returning echoes the brain and auditory nervous system can produce detailed images of the bat's surroundings. This allows bats to detect, localize and even classify their prey in complete darkness.

Describe a meal you had your friends or family (in someone's home or in a restaurant).

You should say:

who organized this meal

where you had it

what you talked about during the meal

what you ate and drank

and explain why you had this meal with your friends.

Model Answer

The meal I really enjoyed with my friends was the one when we graduated from high school three years ago.

We had it in July, when we just graduated. One of my best friends Monica organized it. She reserved our favourite restaurant which was just two blocks away from our school. It served traditional Chinese food and we all enjoyed it so much.

We often had birthday parties together there, so it was the perfect place for us to, you know, say goodbye to our high school and start a new life.

The food there, like I just said, was very popular. We had a lot of amazing dishes, including MapoTofu, vegetable soup and fried rice. The yummiest one was Kung Pao Chicken, we ordered the super spicy one, and it was crazy hot.

During the dinner, we talked about our future, you know, the university we were going to, the new life we would have in a couple of months. We even came to an agreement that every July, we would come back to the restaurant and had a dinner together. We all made it so far. I mean, we've already had two dinners together.

Describe an item of clothing that someone (recently) gave to you.

You should say:

what it was

who gave it to you

what it looked like

why they gave it to you

and explain how you felt about this gift.

Sample Answer:

It just happened on last year of my birthday. My sister bought me a strapless dress as a present. I felt surprised because this dress is not my taste. My sister said she

bought it for me because she has never seen I wore any this kind of dress. She told me, girls should have to care your appearance and strapless dress is one of the most vital items in my wardrobe. The dress comes from a famous luxury brand and I know lots of my friends dream for it. You know, the dress is black with understated decoration on the hemline. Although I love this gorgeous dress, it could be worn only on formal occasions. So I wore this dress in my graduation ceremony party. A lot of my classmates were fascinated by it and came to ask me where they could buy it. You know, as I said I had never dressed like that before. But after that time, I became more confident and changed my dressing style.

Describe a time when the weather caused you to change your plans.

You should say:

what your plan was (or, plans were)

what weather you were hoping for (or expecting)

what happened

and explain how you felt when you had to change your plans.

Model Answer

I'd like to talk about the time when my travel plan **got shattered by** the horrible weather.

Last summer vacation, my parents took me to Sanya, which is a coastal city in the south of China where there's **gorgeous views** and exciting **entertainment**

facilities. We planed a wonderful vacation during which we could try **palatable seafood**, play exhilarating water sports, or just lie on the beach doing nothing, so as you can imagine, for a girl who has been living far away from the sea, I was pretty **thrilled about** that trip, but **to my great disappointment**, there happened to be a typhoon just the day I arrived there, which totally **ruined my plan**.

It rained heavily and it was unbelievably windy, I couldn't even step outside, otherwise I would **get completely soaked**, plus, it was pretty dangerous, you know, with the gale and all. The typhoon lasted for many days, and it didn't go away until the day I left.

I bought lots of colorful dresses that are designed to wear on the beach but sadly I didn't have the chance to put them on. I thought I could take quite a few **stunning pictures** that I could post on the social networking websites where I can **get a lot of likes**, you know. However, I just **ended up** staying in the boring hotel, complaining about the unexpected weather, which pathetically became my Plan-B.

So I felt that the money I spent on my flight tickets and the hotel just **went down the drain**. It was literally the worst travel experience ever.

Describe a time when someone apologized to you.

You should say:

who apologised to you

why they apologised

where it happened

and explain how you felt (or what you said) after this person apologised.

Band 8.0 Model Answer:

Today I'm going to share with you an occasion when one tour consultant gave me an apology for being **late for picking us up at the airport**.

It just happened in last month. My friends and I decided to go travelling to somewhere during the vacation. Finally, we chose Korea as our destination. As none of us can speak Korean and in order to avoid any uncertainties may occur during the trip, we think joining a travel group may be the best choice for us. So we consulted a local travel agency and made the payment immediately. The travel agency promised that they would pick us up on time at Seoul airport when we arrived there. However, when we arrived in Seoul and waited for over 1 hour, no one showed up. By nature, I'm a **forgiving person** and **hardly take mistakes seriously** because I think anyone can **make blunders** sometime really. But waiting for such a long time made me feel helpless and annoyed. I called back to the travel agency and after an hour of **busy signals**, I finally **got through**. The staff who answered my phone explained to us that it was his fault that he forgot to type our names on this travel group list and he would try his best to solve the problem.

Finally, the company arranged another car to pick us up and we got part of refund as well when we came back to HongKong. He also sent us a long email to **show the apology to us** for his mistake. My **gut instinct** told me that the **apology seemed genuine and sincere**, and I should try to accept the apology and then I **acted on** that acceptance by replying his email to show my appreciation for his

attempts and my willing to recommend their tours to other friends who want to visit Korea.

Describe a story or novel you have (recently) read that you found to be particularly interesting.

You should say:

what the plot of the story or novel was

who wrote it

why you read it

how much time it took to read it

and explain why you thought it was interesting.

Model Answer

Admittedly, for the past few months, I haven't been reading as much as I should because of my new projects at work. It's a shame, because reading is, without a doubt, the best way to learn as well as to relax. The last book that I read, "A still forest pool", is also the one that has had the most significant impact on me.

Basically, "A still forest pool" is a book about meditation written by Ajahn Chah, a Buddhist master in Thailand. Ajahn had spent years meditating in forest monasteries, which are not as easy to be found as they were several decades ago. Being among the most influential and respected teacher of Buddhism in his own

country, he has been known as a man of great wisdom who people seek advice from.

“A still forest pool” is such a remarkable book which reflects the author’s simple yet powerful message about Buddhist practice of “everyday mindfulness”. Not only does it describe the importance of staying fully awake in everyday life, but it also shows people how to start living mindfully. The book has profound insights, especially for the West, where Buddhism has recently become more popular.

This is definitely the most interesting book that I have ever read. It helps me realize how important it is to live fully in the present instead of the past or the future. I would recommend it to everyone who is in search for inspiration, motivation or simply a change in attitude in order to live more meaningfully.

Describe some local news that people in your locality are interested in.

You should say:

what the news is

how you know about this news

who is involved in this news

and explain why it is interesting to people.

Sample Answer

Last summer I saw a news on the net which is very interesting and encourage.

In my hometown surrounded with some rural area where is very poor.the young man in there are not satisfied wither living condition,so they move to big city looking for good employment opportunities,but they don't have any skills to earn money,so they study electrical weld in a vocational school.After they graduate they came to Australia by labor service export. They are hard working ,energetic, and gradually received faith form their local employer.Finally they become the Australian Permanent Resident.The salary they earn is enough to afford their house ownership,and they have extra money monthly send back to china for their parents.When this news first appear in china,that vocational school become very popular,and many people want to study in it.Now these guys working and living happily in Australian.

When the first time I heard this news,I felt very interesting but felt more encouragement from it,they came from poor family but had changed their life through their effort ,their spirit deserve all of us to learn it.

Describe the first time you used a foreign language to communicate.

You should say:

who you communicated with

what the situation was

what you said (or wrote)

and explain how you felt during this experience.

Model Answer 1:

I remember the first time I talk with other people in English happened when I was a middle school student.

One day, my mom heard from her colleagues that there was an English Corner that would be held twice a month near our apartment. So she encouraged me to go for practicing English-speaking skills. Actually, I was not willing to do that. But finally I **forced myself toward** it because I know it was a good chance to communicate with foreigners. When I arrived there, a guy **came over** me with a warm smile. He started to introduce himself and showed his friendliness. He spoke English in a fluent and natural way and sounded like a native English speaker. **Needless to say**, I was **a bundle of nerves** because I knew my English accent, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary were not good **at all**. Surprisingly, he told me that English was not his mother tongue and urged me to **speak out**. Thus I used my poor English to chat with him and he listened to me patiently, **complimented on** my accent which made me feel much more confident.

Although we just met **for a while**, that inspirational man really motivated me to learn English **with focus and commitment**. I also **got to understand** that if you want to learn something new, you must be brave and **go towards** it.

Model Answer 2:

The first time I used a foreign language was actually pretty funny. When I was in high school, I attended a summer camp in London, and our school arranged home-stay for us in order to help us learn the language and customs. We were so thrilled about that trip and most of us just couldn't get to sleep on the plane, even though it was an exhausting 15-hour flight. I remember by the time we arrived at our homestay family, it was early in the morning, but due to the jet lag, everyone was drowsy. And I drank a lot of coffee on the way, so I needed to use the bathroom

badly. It was a three-story house, there's no way I could find the bathroom myself. So I asked the mother in the family where the bathroom was, but she led me to a room with a bathtub but no toilet. I was confused. But I suddenly remembered there are minor language differences between American English and British English, so I thought maybe that was one of them. I got out of the "bathroom" and racked my brains trying to find a word better than "pee", 'cause I guess "I want to pee." is not a proper thing to say to a stranger. But I really couldn't think of anything other than that, so I just went ahead and said "Excuse me, where can I pee?" And she took me to a room on the second floor. So that was the first time that I communicated with a foreigner, and as you can see, it was a little embarrassing. But once I got to know the language and their customs better, everything just went much smoother.

Describe an occasion when you helped someone.

You should say:

who you helped

how you helped them

where it happened

why you helped them

and explain how this person reacted to your help

or/and explain how you felt after helping this person.

Sample Answer

Well. There are times when people need other's help and **lend a helping hand to others** as well I am no exception. Last year, I helped my roommate to see a doctor as she could barely walk because of the great pain caused by kidney stone.

Actually, it was in a snowy morning, I waked up and saw that she was **trembling all over** and as white as a sheet in her bed. She thought it would be alright after a while. **Without a second thought**, I took all the cash I had and helped her to get dressed, and then we hurried to the nearest hospital in a taxi. However, after all the difficulties we had in catching a taxi and all the coldness and pain my roommate suffered, the hospital did not **put an immediate end to** it. We had to **stand in a long line** to pay the registration fee first. What **pissed me off** was that there were still more patients before us waiting to see the doctor. Later, with prescription in hand, I had to do the whole waiting thing again to pay for and pick up medicine separately. Thankfully, the **acute pain** of my roommate was greatly **relieved by a shot of painkiller**. As we returned to school, I put her to bed and saw her grateful look.

For my part, I think it is quite natural to help people we care about and expect nothing in return. And I believe a friend in need is a friend indeed. Besides, I do enjoy the feeling of being needed.

Describe what you think would be the perfect job (or "dream job") for you.

You should say:

what job it would be (or is)

what you would do in this job

what skills you would need to learn for this job

and explain why you think this would be the perfect job for you.

Sample Answer

It has always been my dream to be a singer ever since I was a child. When I was a kid I used to be a singing talent. I would win many singing competitions and represented the school in the choir. However, because of the pressure of the College Entrance Exam I had to stop singing and focus on my studies to go to a good university.

The main reason why I'd like to be a singer is cuz it would allow me to inspire the world. I'm quite fond of the idea that people would be listening to my songs and trying to be more like me-a nice guy.

These days, the only time I sing is probably in the shower or when I'm at a karaoke bar with my friends. I even had a plan for how to spend all the money I would make once I became famous guess I'll have to earn money the old fashioned way now-by starting my own company.

If I had a chance I would definitely choose to be a singer but I'm still quite realistic and that's why I'm going abroad to study business.

Describe a magazine or newspaper that you like to read.

You should say:

what magazine or newspaper it is

what the magazine or newspaper is about

how often you read it

what kinds of people generally read this magazine or newspaper

and explain why you like to read it.

Sample Answer

Personally, I would like to say that my favorite musician is Michael Jackson. And there are a couple of reasons to name.

Firstly, throughout his career he received numerous honors and awards. He is the "King of Pop", but more and more people think "King of Pop" is not big enough for him; he should be the best entertainer in the history. Also, Jackson had a notable impact on music and culture throughout the world. For much of his career, he had an "unparalleled" level of worldwide influence over the younger generation through his musical and humanitarian contributions. And he is pretty diligent. When he was a little kid, he practices his voice and dancing regularly. Admittedly, he is very gifted, but I think his success mostly dues to his hard-working. Personally, I would like to say that my favorite musician is Michael Jackson. And there are a couple of reasons to name. Firstly, throughout his career he received numerous honors and awards. He is the "King of Pop", but more and more people think "King of Pop" is not big enough for him; he should be the best entertainer in the history. Also, Jackson had a notable impact on music and culture throughout the world. For much of his career, he had an "unparalleled" level of worldwide influence over the younger generation through his musical and humanitarian contributions. And he is pretty diligent. When he was a little kid, he practices his voice and dancing

regularly. Admittedly, he is very gifted, but I think his success mostly dues to his hard-working.

Describe a place with a lot of water (such as a river, a lake or the ocean) that you enjoyed visiting.

You should say:

where this place was

what people were doing at this place (Or, what you did there)

why you went there

who you went there with

and explain why you liked this place.

Model Answer

I have visited many places near a river or a sea and I enjoyed the scenic beauty and vast water very much. I would like to talk about a river I visited 2 years back. I chose to talk about it because I really enjoyed my visit there.

The name of the river was (...say a river's name...) and it was in (...say a place's name...). One of our relatives invited us to visit their house and we decide to visit there. I went there with 4 of my family members including my parents. After we reach there, I was amazed to notice that our relative's house was near a big river. This was the first time I visited that relatives and I was very excited about the beauty of the nature there.

After we reach our relative's house, my younger sister told me that she would like to visit the river. I restrained her by saying that we will all go there in the evening. In the evening we went near the river and the river was very calm at that moment. A sweet wind was blowing from the river and the weather was very pleasant. We sat near the river and had our tea. That was kind of family picnic. I had my younger brother, sister, my parents and 3 of our relatives at this place. Since this was the summer season, we felt very comfortable being at the bank of the river. We noticed many boats were in the river and we planned to rent a boat for an hour. When we were in the boat, the wind suddenly started blowing heavily. We quickly came to the high land and left for our relative's house.

Describe a time when you made a mistake.

You should say:

where you were

what you were doing

what mistake you made

and explain what was the result of your mistake.

Band 8.5 Model Answer:

Ok right then, I had a project I was working on, and while I was in the middle of typing up my documentation, my computer started acting weird. It froze for a while and so I rebooted. After 10 minutes, the computer showed a blue screen saying that there were problems and recommended that I reboot the computer again. After

another reboot, everything appeared to be ok. I continued my work and finished for the day. I spent two days on this assignment and when I went to retrieve my data the next day to double check my work, my computer wouldn't start up. A technician came and found that my hard drive malfunctioned. I lost all the data and lost two days of work.

I was disappointed and thought I would never trust a computer again, but there was a great lesson to be learned. I had a couple of warnings and I ignored them. From then on, I practiced being someone who can anticipate problems. I now think of potential problems ahead of time and pay attention to details along the way. If I applied this sooner, I would have saved the data on another computer and I wouldn't have lost a couple days of work. But I can't say I regret making the mistake because it made me someone who can anticipate problems better.

Describe a big company that you would like to work in.

You should say:

the name of this company

what this company does

where this company is

and explain why you would like to work in this company.

Sample Answer

The big company that I am interested in must be Apple. Apple is an American multinational corporation that designs and markets consumer electronics, computer software, and personal computers. The company's best-known hardware products: the iPod, the iPhone and the iPad. As of August 2010, the company operates 301 retail stores in ten countries, and an online store where hardware and software products are sold. As of May 2010, Apple is one of the largest companies in the world and the most valuable technology company in the world, having surpassed Microsoft. Apple have about 46,600 full time employees and 2,800 temporary full time employees worldwide and had worldwide annual sales of \$65.23 billion last year. Apple has established a unique reputation in the consumer electronics industry. This includes a customer base that is devoted to the company and its brand, particularly in the United States. Fortune magazine named Apple the most admired company in the United States in 2008, and in the world in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Describe something that you have shared with others (or another person)

You should say:

what you shared

who you shared it with.

why you shared it

and explain how you felt about sharing it

Sample Answer

I would love to share my depression experience with a stranger.

I had depressed feelings for a number of years. I couldn't **find joy in** anything, my **energy level was low** and I was struggling to do basic chores like cleaning and washing. I found it incredible when people would suggest things like getting exercise to make me happier. All I could think was, I can't **drag myself out of bed** to take a shower, and how the hell am I supposed to drag myself to the gym?

A friend of mine realised what was happening, and after one particular **outburst of tears and misery**, he suggested I went to the university counselor. Talking things through with someone who is completely unbiased is a wonderful experience. Even when you think you have nothing to talk about, they are good at getting you started. Unfortunately, there was a limited time frame, and I felt those feelings creeping back. I finally went to my doctor, told them I had tried counselling, and asked if medication was an option. He agreed. I know that anti-depressants are a controversial topic, but they were truly life-changing. The first type did not help. The second type was like opening a window. They did not make me happy. What they did do, however, is give me the strength to start making myself happy. I stopped crying for no reason. I was able to sleep soundly. The thoughts screaming around my head ground to a halt so I could focus, and I started enjoying things again. I still have bad days, but they are days - not weeks, or months.

In short, seek professional help. Friends and family are wonderful, but they can be biased and I can feel guilty for 'troubling' them with my feelings. Professionals are just that. I was proud of myself for taking that first step to find support.

Describe a creative person who you admire (e.g., a scientist, an inventor)

You should say:

who this person is

what area of creativity they work in

how you know about this person

and explain what work they have created that you particularly admire.

Model Answer

I'm going to talk about a musician/songwriter that I admire, called Adam Levine. He's also a singer who plays the guitar and writes his own songs. I think he recorded his first album about 10 years ago with his band called Maroon 5, and he's released several other CDs since then.

He became successful after many years of writing songs and performing live in small venues all over the country. Gradually he built a following of people who liked his music. I think the key to his success was one of his songs that was used on a TV advertisement. This meant that more people became aware of his music.

I found out about Adam because one of my friends got tickets to see him in concert. I hadn't heard any of his music before, but I went along to the gig and really enjoyed it. After that I bought the first CD, and now I've got all of them.

The reason I'm into Adam is that he has worked hard for his success: it takes years of practice to become a good singer and guitarist, and he spent several years playing to very small audiences before he became successful. I also like the fact that he writes his own music. I admire people who have worked hard to get where they are.

Describe a positive change that you made to your life.

You should say:

when it happened

where it happened

what the change was

and explain how you have benefited from this change

(or, explain how you feel about this change)

Sample answer :

The positive change that I would like to talk about is 'I started playing outdoor games instead of playing computer games'. After I got my first personal computer when I was only 9 years old or so, I started learning many things. Besides that I started playing the computer games. As computer games are addictive I found that I was playing the games whenever I had spare times. This addiction barred me from playing outdoor games like cricket, football etc.

I found myself very much attracted to the computer games and I preferred to play the games at home instead of going to open spaces or fields to participate in outdoor games that involve physical exercises. Not that computer games are all so bad, but playing them all the time someone has got is not a good thing especially for kids. I found that I was spending more times at home than being outside. After my parents noticed that, they discussed with me about that and explained me the

importance of outdoor activities. They gave me strict restriction that I would only be able to play computer games for an hour daily and in the evening I'd have to go outside to play with my friends.

This was obviously a very positive change for me. I'm not against computer games but I feel that if there are more important things to do, then we should not spend time on computer games only.

This change affected me very positively. I became a good cricket player later on, I started maintaining my times more prudently and I am sure this change has affected me positively in terms of physical and mental health.

Describe a situation that made you a little angry.

You should say:

what it was that made you angry

where you were when this happened

what you were doing at the time

who you were with

and explain how you handled this situation or and explain why you felt angry.

Sample Answer

A recent situation that made me angry was **getting stuck** in a traffic jam on the way to meet some friends. It was last Sunday lunchtime, and I didn't expect there

to be much traffic; people don't work on Sundays, so the roads aren't usually very busy.

Everything was going well until suddenly I saw **a queue of cars** on the road in front of me. I had no choice but to join the queue and wait to get past whatever was causing the delay. It **turned out** that it was caused by some roadworks, and it took me an extra 30 minutes to get past them.

Getting stuck in traffic congestion doesn't usually make me angry, but this time it did, mainly because I wasn't expecting it and I knew that my friends were waiting to meet me for lunch. I felt frustrated and powerless because there was nothing I could do to change the situation, and I had no idea how long I would be sitting there waiting. When I finally saw the reason for the congestion, I was relieved that I was close to **getting past** the roadworks, but I still felt a bit stressed knowing that I was half an hour late.

Describe your favourite season or time of the year.

You should say:

what season (or time of the year) it is

what the weather is like at this time

what people usually do at this time

and explain why you enjoy that season or time of the year or

and explain why you enjoy that season or time of the year more than other seasons or times of the year.

Model Answer

My favourite season in England is winter. A typical English winter would last around 4 or 5 months between November and March, but when I say that I like the winter, I'm really thinking about the coldest month or two each year. During those really **wintry months**, the **temperature drops** below zero and it often snows. Over the last few years we've had **periods of quite heavy snowfall, to the extent** that roads have been blocked and schools have had to close. Last winter I remember looking out of the window one morning and seeing everything covered in **a layer of white**. Obviously the snow is what **differentiates winter from the other seasons**, but when it doesn't snow there isn't much difference between winter, autumn and spring; winter is just a bit colder. The reason I've chosen winter as my favourite season is because I like the snow. I live near the countryside, and the landscape looks beautiful when everything is covered in white. We also celebrate Christmas and New Year in the winter, and these are my favourite festivals.

Describe a person who you like to spend time with.

You should say:

what relationship the two of you have

how often you are together

what you usually do together

and explain why you like to spend time with this person.

Model Answer

I spend a lot of time with my best friend John. I've known him since primary school where we were in the same class.

We only see each other during our university holidays because we don't study in the same city. My university is in London but he lives in Liverpool.

When we are together we always play lots of sports like football and tennis. John loves Manchester United and he is a very good footballer. I prefer tennis but I am not as good as my friend. We also both enjoy playing computer games. Our favourite is probably World of Warcraft which many of my friends play too.

As we live in a small town there aren't many places to go so we normally hang out at the sports centre or in the big park near my house. We're both big film buffs so we go to the cinema quite often and we get a student discount.

I really like spending time with John, he's such a nice person and very friendly. I always have a good time when we are together and he never fails to make me laugh. In fact, I think he's the funniest person I know.

Describe a skill you learned when you were a child.

You should say:

what skill it was

who taught you this skill

how you learned it

and explain why you learned this skill.

Model Answer

Typing on a keyboard without looking at that is a special skill and recently I have learnt to type by not looking at the keyboard.

When I was 10 years old, my father bought me a computer, it was impossible for me to type without looking at the keys. It took longer hours for me to type a single page by searching the letters on the keys. It was a troublesome task for me and most of the time I had to type different topics on computer. But I could not complete the tasks in due time for my lack of skills in typing. When I started to type, it appeared to me that the letters should be placed on the keyboard alphabetically for better use. But gradually I learnt that this way is better than the alphabetical letters.

Basically I learnt the skill at my home using my personal computer. In the very beginning, it was tougher for me to compose anything on the computer with the keyboard attached with it and it took longer hours for me to compose a document of three or four pages. So, I started using internet to get some ways to learn typing. I found some special applications that allow the users to get the desired typing skill. Besides, the applications also helped me to make the typing faster than it was in the beginning.

All of the earned skills are useful in real life but the applications may differ in situations. When I started learning the skill, I thought that it would be of no use in

my practical life and I am wasting my times. But when I took part in my work, I was surprised by the applications of typing . I have started serving the office in different ways with the typing skill. As a result, my fame has increased as a typing expert and accordingly the office has evaluated my performance. I have been promoted to senior administrative officer after three months when I applied the skill to my daily works at the workplace. So, it appears to be a very useful skill for me.

Describe someone you know who recently moved to new accommodation.

You should say:

who he or she is

what kind of accommodation they moved to

and explain why they moved.

Sample Answer

Speaking of a person who moves to a new accommodation, I just think of my friend Linda. Her neighbor frequently played his music excessively loud, which rattles the change off her coffee table. She spoke to him repeatedly and he always turns it down to merely loud. But then turns it back up within the hour. She said she couldn't stand her downstairs neighbor any more so she changed her living place. Now her new neighbors are about 70 years old and they are very quiet. She stays at college most of the time. They don't have anything in common and just say "hi" when they meet.

The new accommodation she moves to is in a suburb. Linda has to drive 20 minutes to go to the grocery store. But she doesn't mind it because she can live in a bigger than before. When she looks out of the window, she can see the flowers and cute birds flying in the sky. The only thing should be improved of her new accommodation is the blue-color stars all over the walls. Although they glow in the dark, during the day they make her feel depressed. Therefore, she plans to add some posters on them.

Describe a leader who you admire.

You should say:

who this person is

what this person does (as a leader)

how he or she became a leader

how you know about this person (or, how you personally know this person)

and explain explain why you admire this leader (= explain how (or why) this leader's qualities impress you)

Describe a dream you have had

You should say:

When you had this dream

What you saw in the dream

What you did or said in the dream

And explain why you had a dream like that

Model Answer:

I'd like to talk about the nightmare I had the other night.

On the way to a mountain in the dead of winter, I dropped behind the group I was traveling with and got lost. To make matters worse, it began to rain heavily. The wind blew hard, and the blasted forest groaned as if in pain. And so overcast was the sky that night came several hours earlier than usual. Cold and frightened, I was trembling all over. All I could do was shout for help, but no help was forthcoming. The night became darker, the wind blew harder, and the rain poured down more heavily. I ate my last piece of food, a tiny piece of cake. Totally despaired, I was waiting not for miracle but for death. Suddenly, a thunderclap woke me up. A rainstorm was indeed raging outside, but I was grateful to find that I only had a nightmare.

I still couldn't figure out why I would have that dream, and I certainly wouldn't want it to come true.

Describe a movie you have watched in a cinema or at home

You should say:

When this movie is

Who you would want to watch with

What the movie is about

And explain why you want to watch this movie

Sample Answer:

It's quite hard to say what my favourite movie is because there are quite a few to choose from! But I would say that the one that made the strongest impression on me is a German film called 'The Lives of Others'. This film is set in communist East Germany, shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall. At that time, the Stasi, the East German secret police, used to spy on all kinds of people. The two main characters in the film are a playwright called Dreyman and a Stasi spy called Weisler, whose job it is to keep Dreyman under 24 hour surveillance. Weisler is supposed to be reporting back to his superiors at the Stasi in order to discredit the playwright. However, he develops a strong sympathy for the playwright and his girlfriend, and determines to protect them by not reporting anything significant. The scenes in the film where it cuts from the colourful and interesting lives of Dreyman and his friends to the lonely attic where Weisler is sitting really show the contrast between the two men. The film is shot in such a way that it makes you believe you are also spying on Dreyman, it even made me feel a bit guilty!

I like this film because it has fascinating, 3-dimensional characters, and also the plot has plenty of twists. Right up until the end of the film, we are left guessing how it could possibly end. It is also very thought-provoking because it makes you wonder how many people working for the Stasi actually did protect the people they were spying on.

As for the message it gives, I would say the main message is that we can find kindness and humanity in the most unexpected of places. The film makes us realise that nothing is ever black and white! The film also serves as a warning about the dangers of an oppressive, paranoid regime and is perhaps quite pertinent in this current age of mass surveillance.

Describe a time you missed an appointment for something

You should say:

When and where it happened

What the appointment was for

What happened when you missed it

And explain how you felt about missing the appointment

Band 8.5 Sample Answer:

I missed my first job interview two years ago because of my carelessness. Once I lost it, I feel regret for that late even today.

At that time, as a fresh graduate, an interview appointment is valuable. I applied for Unilever as Sale executive, one of the best global companies with dynamic working environment and good benefits. I waited for about two months after attending at the IQ written test. I received an email announcing that I was one the tenth applicants who successfully passed the test. I was overjoyed when they asked me to join at the formal interview. However, I lost that chance.

The appointment was at sharply 14:00 which I thought would be at 4pm. Thus, I planned to celebrate my friend's birthday around 2pm and leave her house around 3pm for the interview because the journey would take around 45 minutes.

I prepared for the interview carefully and left my friend's house a little bit early as the city I live in has several serious problems of traffic jam. Unfortunately, it started to rain and the bus came late around 3.15pm. The traffic was very bad so the bus was moving very slowly due to the unavoidable traffic jam under heavy rain. At that time, I received a call from the company. With an angry voice, the authority

informed that I missed the appointment and lost the opportunity to work at Unilever. Initially, I felt that my luck is not favoring me and felt a deep sense of anger because I thought it was not my fault but the traffic congestion. However, when I checked email again, I felt pity for me as I could not go to the appointment in time.

It becomes my invaluable experience. Since then, I always read emails and note down carefully the schedule.

Describe an area of subject that you are interested in

You should say:

What it is

When it started to become interested in it

What we have learned from it

And explain why you have interest in it

Band 8.5 Sample Answer:

Biology is my favorite subject. Thanks for learning biology, I have a deep insight about living life around me from a tiny bacterium to a complex human. Among different organisms, I love to elucidate the intricate mechanisms in plants.

Why am I interested in plant biology? Well, it's hard to explain. Plants, even though they are unable to move and speak, they are living things. They have their own language and have a wonderful life. Have you ever asked yourself that why plants are the only organism that have upground part and ground part? It is because carbon dioxide, light and water are the main sources for plants to grow. Water is obtained from soil through a complex root system. Roots keep a plant anchored tightly to the soil as well. Water moves up the plant's stem to the leaves. Sunlight and carbon dioxide are taken by leaves. Therefore, plants use water, light energy

and carbon dioxide to make glucose, a kind of sugar and this is the food for plant to grow.

You see? Just a very simple example, plants are worth to study about. That's also a reason why I choose Plant Biotechnology as my major. By using molecular technology, I can learn more inside of plant cells and discover the mechanisms in plants. Thanks for understanding of plant biology, it is applicable to manipulate and improve crop yield. It pours more and more passion to me for my future career.

Describe an interesting or unusual thing you did recently (in your free time)

You should say

What you did

When and where you did it

Who you did it with

And explain why you think it was interesting or unusual

Band 8.5 Sample Answer:

In all seriousness, between school and the office where I am working as an intern, I **barely** have time for entertainment. Though, when I do, I **take it seriously**. Once or twice, I managed to **get out of** the city and **indulged** myself in **secluded areas** where Internet service and its distracting minions like social media and advertising emails **ceased to** exist. My latest **sweet escape** was my trip to ABC island last summer.

ABC was one of the four deserted, yet beautiful islands located in X due to **little exposure to** tourism. This, however, would change **drastically** within the next few years since ABC had been **drawing lots of attention** thanks to **positive feedbacks** from those who had wandered there. I went to Binh Ba alone just

to **take a break from** the **fast-paced** city life and to have time to **contemplate** myself, which I **rarely** did with people around. It had been an **intriguing** 2-day journey full of surprises. That was the first time I traveled alone, first time riding on a speedboat, first time scuba diving and first time having dinner with a life jacket on my back and crystal clear water as my dining room. **Additionally**, seafood here was a bomb which **came in different kinds and varieties**. People I met during my stay at a villager's house were **ultra-friendly** and helpful, both locals and visitors whom shared their stories as though you were their **long-lost friend** stopping by to catch up. And there was nothing better than enjoying great company over a nice meal and bonfire.

X **left an unforgettable impression on** me where I learnt to **appreciate** precious moments with those I cared about and **be grateful for** whatever life had to offer. Life is tough but it would be lifeless without its toughness.

Vocabulary & Useful Expression

- **in all seriousness** = very serious

In all seriousness, I don't take it well when people give rude comments without a sound reason.

- **barely = rarely**: almost not

Ex: Jim barely knows anyone when first moving to the new city.

- **cease (+to)**: bring to an end:

Ex: Those talented artists never ceased to amaze the world with their masterpieces.

- **take something/ someone seriously:** regard someone or something as important and worthy of attention

Ex: Nowadays, people are taking environmental issue more and more seriously.

- **manage to do something:** succeed in doing something, especially something difficult

Ex: Alex managed to close the deal with XYZ company after several times of rejection.

- **indulge in:** allow yourself to have or do something that you like, especially something that is considered bad for you

Ex: She got herself indulged in some serious unhealthy diet after her latest breakup.

- **secluded = deserted:** quiet and private; not used or disturbed by other people

Ex: That secluded island is suitable for those who need to get away from busy life in big city.

- **(little) exposure to:** the state of being in a place or situation where there is no protection from something harmful or unpleasant

Ex: Local tribes in those mountainous area have little exposure to civilization.

- **drastically (adv):** extremely

Ex: The weather has changed drastically within the last few years.

- **draw someone's attention:** attract someone to notice

Ex: Ally's amazing transformation has finally drawn Tim's attention, whom she always has had a huge crush on since forever.

- **(positive/ constructive/ negative) feedback:** advice, criticism or information about how good or useful something or somebody's work is

Ex: I usually receive constructive feedback from my boss about how to improve my work or productivity, which I find very appreciative.

- **take a break (from):** to rest or cease temporarily from something

Ex: He took a break after 4 consecutive hours working on the project.

- **contemplate:** to think deeply about something for a long time

Ex: Everyone should have sometime to contemplate and reflect themselves once in a while to truly understand who they are as a person.

- **intriguing** = interesting
- **long-lost friend:** friend you haven't met for a long time

Ex: She is my long-lost cousin whom I haven't seen for ages.

- **good/ great company:** someone who people enjoy spending time with

Ex: Nick was a great company when we met during my trip to Sapa last year.

- **unforgettable impression:** a feeling/ opinion one gets which is hard to forget

Ex: She left an unforgettable impression on me at the party last night.

Describe an advertisement you have seen/heard recently

You should say:

When and where you saw it

What was advertised

What the contents of the advertisements were

And explain how you felt about it

Band 8.5 Sample Answer:

We have been **bombarded with an array of** information every single day. Whether it is newspaper, television or social media like Facebook or LinkedIn, news always has their own way to reach us. One of the most frequent **pieces of news** I have encountered these past few days was about Echelon Vietnam 2016 – Discover Asia’s Next Dragon.

As an avid Facebook user, I **scroll down** my newsfeeds board practically every 30 minutes to **stay abreast of** every latest action within my social network. Admittedly, there are some better things I can do but I just **can’t help myself**. Therefore, the fact that Echelon Vietnam 2016 repeatedly **popped up** on my newsfeed really **caught my attention**. Some of my friends were already “interested” in Echelon official page, others were even “going”. It **piqued my interest** so much that I **paid a visit to** their website to figure out **what their gig was**. **As far as I am concerned**, Echelon Vietnam 2016 this November is a 2-day international technology and investment event for entrepreneurs and business leaders within and outside Vietnam. It is **appealing** not only to big tech companies but **tech savvy** individuals as well. The event aims to reach out to foreign investors, **raising funding opportunities** and developing the **tech and startup**

community in Vietnam in the era where **tech disruptions** are leading almost every industry. With some of the most brilliant and **world-class** speakers, attendees are going to get some **food for thought** and inspiration during and after the event.

I personally believe that this could be **a golden opportunity** for Vietnam to shine as a **promising land** where young and talented engineers, developers and entrepreneurs are thriving non-stop toward a better future, a better life within Vietnam and beyond. If I am able to **schedule my time** and **afford** the tickets, I will definitely be there to **enjoy the vibe** and **explore** many **potentials** in this rising industry.

Vocabulary & Useful Expression

- **be bombarded with:** to be attacked (with too much information, criticism...)
- **stay abreast of:** keep up-to-date
- **poke someone's interest:** to arouse interest; to arouse curiosity
- **pay a visit to:** visit somewhere
- **what one's gig is** (informal): what is special, interesting... about something
- **tech savvy (a):** well informed about or proficient in the use of modern technology
- **food for thought:** issues to be considered
- **vibe (n):** a mood or an atmosphere produced by a particular person, thing or place
- **tech disruptions:** newest innovations in technology

Describe a bicycle/motorbike/car trip that is interesting

You should say:

Where you would like to go

How you would like to go there

Who you would like to go with

And explain why you would like to go there by car, motorbike or bike

Band 8.0 Sample Answer:

There is a thing that troubles me more often than not when living in my country is the majority of people are riding motorbikes rather than cars. As a result, most people don't know how to drive a car, I included, which also itches me since I have always wanted to take a road trip across the country. A road trip by car from the south to the north would be tough, and adventurous even, due to hundreds of marvelous destinations are awaiting to be explored. However, it is worth to take risk and step out of your comfort zone to truly experience what life has to offer when your legs can still drag you rather than to regret in your later life. "If you wanna go fast, go alone. If you wanna go far, go together." It might be fun if you were a lone traveler and didn't enjoy getting lagged behind your schedule. Still, the adventure could be more colorful and unexpected, hopefully in a good way, when you got company, especially during a long journey like this. Hence, picking up a close friend or two who share the same viewpoints, the same eager desire to capture the beautiful landscapes of my country with me would be my choice. We would start from the south where we are living and move north on the go, stopping at our favorite beaches like X, Y... a little longer than other places because ain't nobody don't have time for juicy coconut and white sand paradise. Our cuisine would also be our utmost priority whenever we reach a new place as there is no better way to live like a local other than eat like a local and I really look forward for

that. The car would give us room to comfortably converse with each other and shelter from inclement weather, if any. It is not about the destinations but also about the time I would love to spend with my dear friends as we would share the same space in a four-wheel vehicle along the road; because at the end of the day, it's people that matters.

Describe a sport that you prefer to do and is a little expensive

You should say

What it is

How much it usually costs

Who usually do it with

And explain why you like to do this activity

Band 8.0 Sample Answer:

Even though people say it's quite costly, it's meant for the rich, but I would love to play tennis one day.

I knew just a bit about this sport, but it's not too hard to estimate the price. As an amateur, at least I should have a nice Nike or Adidas which up to now is about 50 USD, not to mention other fancy sportswear like T- shirt, shorts and socks. For equipment, bats, bat bags and also I should never forget safety equipment, sadly, it's said that the higher it costs the better, so I'm gonna give it around 200 USD. So that would be 250 USD in total. Quite expensive I'm afraid. Anyway, my dad, who is not only motivated, but also knowledgeable about the sport, would definitely be my go-to partner. I guess the reason why I'm into this quite-expensive sport firstly is because of its intense, intensive practice, intensive competitiveness, for example, which helps increase my patience and focus. In addition, such

independent sport makes me feel rewarded, feel proud because what I've won actually is myself.

Describe someone who has a great influence on you

You should say:

Who this person is

How she knew this person

What influence this person has on you

And how you think of the influence

Band 8.0 Sample Answer:

For this topic, I would definitely talk about my best guy friend. Probably it's his personalities that not only makes me feel so proud to be a friend of his, but also inspires me to improve myself.

The first characteristic that makes my friend special is that he's a typical perfectionist. In almost any situation that he can come up with the best solution and reasons why it's the best. Sometimes I get a bit lost, his amazing analyzing skill indeed helps get me through. Another characteristic that I've found super inspiring is his determination. Well, I suppose that most men are born determined, however, my friend is a different story. He never gives up on things he's really passionate about. For example, last semester, he slept only 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week continuously to get his group project done. In addition, it's not a big surprise that his name is always in top-student list. That passion, that determination have encouraged me to keep moving forward.

Generally, for a great shift that he brought to my life, I am thankful for having this friend.

Describe a person/something that made you laugh

You should say:

What made you laugh

Where you were when it happened

Who you were with

And explain why it made you laugh

SAMPLE ANSWER:

One of my best friends has a 3-year-old **baby girl**; so every time we **went out**, she would take her with us. Her little girl is such a witty kid, and she is always **full of energy**. As she begins to be aware of the outside **world**, she asks a lot of **questions** just to satisfy her curiosity. It happened one day when we went out **shopping**. While her mother and I took turns trying clothes on, she was sitting quietly on the bench. Then she looked at me and her mother and started to **express her opinions** on our **clothes**. The way she talked was so **funny** that we couldn't stop laughing. She was so used to playing with her **Barbie doll** that she suggested we should dress like one of her **dolls**. She even taught us how to walk like models because she thought that was **pretty**. All the customers who walked in the store **noticed** her, even the **store owner** couldn't stop laughing at her since she was still a **baby girl**, but she **talked and acted** like a grown-up. That was probably the best part of the shopping trip that I will **never forget**.

Describe your favorite movie

You should say

When and where you saw it

What type of film it was

What the film was about

And explain why it is your favorite film

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER

As a frequent **moviegoer**, I watch a multitude of films. One of the movies I'm much into is "One day", an American romantic drama movie. It is directed by Lone Scherfig based on a novel of the same name. I watched this movie at least three times yet still love to watch **again and again**.

The movie opens with a short scene of the day after their graduation on 14 July 1988 of two main characters, Dexter Mayhew (Jim Surgess) and Emma Morley (Anne Hathaway). They **spent the night** together but **came up with** an agreement to be just friends, and spent the following day together, the 15th, St. Swithin's day. However, they couldn't **keep the promise**. They **went through** different **circumstances**, troubles, got marriage and lived apart from each other until 2004, Emma and Dexter finally realized they were **a perfect match** and got engaged and married. Unfortunately, despite many efforts, they have not yet had kids. On 15th July 2006, Emma had a car accident when she was crossing the street. Dexter became **inconsolable** and was particularly **desolated** each year on that day. The movie ends up with the scene back to 1988 when they first met and promised to always be best friends.

This movie usually get me **burst into tears** no matter how many times I've watched it. Not only was the story itself so miserable but also the actor and actress **outperformed the ordinary**. This movie also aimed to encourage people to appreciate the happiness and true love from the ones who have **always been there for** them.

Vocabulary

Moviegoer (noun) a person who goes to the cinema

To do Sth again and again (v) to love constantly repeating Sth

To spend the night (v) to sleep over

To come up with (v) to think of Sth

To keep the promise (v) to do what you said you would do

A perfect match (n) to perfectly fit with another

To always be there for SO (v) to strongly and consistently support SO anyhow

Inconsolable (adj) so unhappy or disappointed that no one can make you feel better

To outperform the ordinary (v) to perform significantly well

Describe a piece of (electrical or electronic) equipment in your home

You should say:

What it is

How often you use it

Who you usually use it with

And explain why this item is important to you

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

Since I was **very small**, I have had a special interest in **cooking**. So, it is no surprise that, now that I have **grown up**, I dream of having an oven with rings for cooking **on top**, which is in very popular use **overseas**. In my country, this kind of oven is only sold at big electronic and appliance centers. Different from the **normal oven**, **this one** provides more **stable and exact** temperatures, which is one of the critical factors in **baking**. Besides, it has four **oven top elements**, which is highly convenient because it allows you to **cook and bake** at the same time. It also saves a lot of **space** in your kitchen because it is **free-standing**. **Another feature** that I would like the oven to have is a **self-**

cleaning system. If you cook **frequently**, you will definitely appreciate this facility. It is inevitable that **when you cook**, your oven/cooker will get dirty. As a result, with the **self-cleaning feature**, it is **much easier** for us to clean.

VOCABULARY:

grow up: [phrasal verb] to develop into an adult. Example: The children have all **grown up** and left home now.

appliances: [noun] a machine which is designed to do a particular job in the home, such as cleaning or preparing food. Example: The store sells a range of **household appliances**, including microwave ovens and washing machines.

baking: [noun] the process of cooking something in the oven using dry heat. Example: My mother loves **baking** – she makes bread and cakes every week in her oven.

free-standing: [adjective] not a part of or attached to something else. Example: The cupboard was **free-standing**, so it was easy to move it away from the wall.

self-cleaning: [adjective] able to be cleaned without a person having to clean it. Example: Her new oven was **self-cleaning**; when it was dirty it cleaned itself automatically.

facility: [noun] a special feature of a machine that enables it to do something extra. Example: My computer has a **facility** for checking spelling.

Describe a garden you have visited and liked

You should say:

Where it was

What it looked like

What you did there

And explain why you liked it there

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would like to share with you my impressions of a garden that I visited last summer, which was full of colour and interest: Claude Monet's house and garden in Giverny, France.

As a big fan of Monet's paintings, especially the famous „Water Lilies“, I had always dreamed of seeing the scene in real life. So, when some friends suggested a visit last year, I jumped at the chance. After a journey of about an hour by train from our hotel, we arrived at Giverny. The garden was exactly as he had painted it – it was a riot of colour, from the peaceful white of the water lilies to the striking reds and oranges which filled some of the flowerbeds. The two parts of the garden complemented each other perfectly. We first admired the array of bright flowers and fruit trees in the Clos Normand, but my favourite part was the water garden, and we enjoyed a leisurely stroll, taking in all the colours, perfumes and bird songs. Monet avidly collected prints of Japanese gardens, and these inspired the Japanese bridges covered with wisterias, the water lilies in the pond, and the bamboo and weeping willows which he planted.

For me, it was like a wonderland of colours and a dream come true after so many years.

Describe something you did with a group of people

You should say:

What the activity was

When and where you did it

Who you were with

And explain how you felt about being part of this group

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would like to describe a person who I had to be friendly to, although I did not really like her. I think this situation is quite common in our lives, especially when we have to act as part of a team.

A couple of months ago, I was assigned to a team at my workplace in order to tackle a big project. As part of the team, I had to cooperate closely with this person. However, we had never really liked each other for several reasons. Firstly, she is much older than I am, so she always thinks she is right and disregards the opinions of others. I would describe her as both bossy and officious, although she did not have a more senior position than I did in the company. Secondly, I considered her irresponsible because she did not appear to me to pay serious attention to the project. So, although it was supposedly a group project, I ended up working all on my own as much as possible in order to see the task through.

As the work was vital for our company, we had to be successful. I therefore had no choice except to collaborate with her in order to finish the job. I would rather have done all the work alone, but if I had refused to work with her as part of the team, then the evaluation of my job performance would have been affected at the end of the year. So, knowing her personality as I did, I swallowed my pride and

tried to be patient. Despite our many arguments, we completed the task on time. I learned that sometimes people can work together, even though they don't get on with each other. It just needs a little bit of time and patience to work things out, and each person has to compromise to achieve a common goal.

VOCABULARY

- ☐ disregard = to pay no attention to something or someone.
- ☐ bossy = a bossy person is someone who is always telling other people what to do.
- ☐ officious = an officious person is someone who uses their authority or position to give orders to others - another word would be domineering.
- ☐ irresponsible = an irresponsible person has no feeling of responsibility for something.
- ☐ supposedly = according to what most people think.
- ☐ end up = to find yourself in a situation that you did not expect to be in.
- ☐ on my own = alone.
- ☐ see.....through = if we see something through, we do not give up until it is finished.
- ☐ collaborate = to work together with others to achieve something.
- ☐ swallowed my pride = to hide my feelings, even though I wanted to express what I was thinking.

- get on with = to get on with someone is to have a friendly relationship with them.
- work things out = to find a solution.
- compromise = to give up some of your ideas in order to come to an agreement with someone.

Describe a place where you go to relax

You should say

Where it is

How often you go there

What you usually do there

And explain why it relaxes you

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

Today, I'm going to share with you a place where I usually/often go to relax, which is a small café/restaurant near my company/my house named "ABC".

As a full-time employee/student, I have to go to work/ school 5 days a week; therefore, the only time that I can visit this place is on weekends. I always try to make time for my little trip to "ABC" café every Saturday or Sunday. The coffee house is located on a quiet street with a lot of trees planted on both sides. Additionally, it has a patio with hanging gardens which I like very much; it makes me feel like I'm sitting in a garden of my own.

Separated from the hustle and bustle of the city life, this place allows me to sit quietly and reflect, relaxing after a week of hard work. I can concentrate on a

personal project such as reading or writing in my journal without being interrupted by other people. It serves great coffee, tea, and cakes, thus, the place always smells very nice. In addition, the employees are also friendly and helpful. Sometimes, I go there with my friends. Over a nice cup of coffee/tea, we share our stories and smell the beautiful scent of the flowers. At that moment, we can escape from reality for a little while and enjoy ourselves even more.

Describe a small business you want to have in the future

You should say:

What it would be

What you need to prepare for it

Where you would have this business

And explain why you would like to do this business

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I've always been interested in different kinds of handcrafted jewelry, such as macrame, beading, and other kinds of knotting and stitching with cord or wire. So I'm thinking I'd like to go into business selling and making that kind of jewelry.

It wouldn't even have to be a big production, just a few people making and selling bracelets, necklaces, and other accessories. Maybe if we become popular and more people start buying our products we could even open a small shop and take special orders. We could also have classes, where we teach people how to make their own jewelry. I was thinking that my cousin could help me since she is quite good with her hands; I think she has some friends who are good at macrame so they could help also. We could put an ad in the newspaper or on the Internet and sell our wares that way. During holidays we'd travel around China and sell our

jewelry at famous parks and places that tourists frequent. We'd each just make the things that we're best at so that we get a bunch of quality products in as short an amount of time as possible.

The main reason I'd start a business like this is because it's something that I enjoy doing, and I don't think I could work at a job that I don't like.

Describe a wild animal

You should say:

What it looks like

Where you can see it

What it likes to eat or do

And explain why you like it

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would like to tell you about an opportunity that I had to see a white tiger, which is one of the star attractions in Singapore Zoo, during my last summer vacation.

I was recommended to see this white tiger first due to its rarity and uncommon beauty. Its habitat in the zoo is landscaped to resemble a dense jungle. I was truly overawed and felt excited at first sight by its gorgeous appearance. This giant cat has blue eyes, a pink nose, and creamy white fur covered with brown stripes. In the wild, this animal's diet consists of monkeys, birds and other animals as it is a carnivore. It also prefers killing young, weak or old animals because they cannot run as fast and are often abandoned by their herd. In the zoo, it is fed on animal flesh, even including imported kangaroo meat.

At the beginning I felt a little bit apprehensive because tigers are well - known as a dangerous species as well as the king of animals. However after encountering this white tiger, I changed my mind since it was very cute and friendly to humans. As tigers in general and white tigers in particular are endangered species, I believe that people should make a great effort to preserve them from extinction.

Describe an interesting photo

You should say:

Who took it

Who was in the photo

When the photo was taken

And explain why it was interesting

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

As I am interested in photography, I have taken thousands of photos. However, the most meaningful photograph to me is the big one of my family. The picture is hung on the wall of my living room and it is the first thing that everyone notices since the moment they walk into my house.

The photograph was taken one year ago on an occasion of summer holiday. It was the first time that my family enjoyed the summer vacation together. We decided to go on a trip to Sam Son beach which is one of the most popular destinations for summer holiday in my country.

The photo was probably the first picture of my whole family with my parents, my older brother, my little sister and me. It is such a brilliant photo, with every one standing on the beach and smiling. The one behind the camera was a professional photographer who has a great eye for photography. You can even see the crystal

clear water sparkling under the sunlight and the seashore in the background. It was a scorching hot day, and the sky was blue with no clouds, making it a perfect scene to take a photo.

The photo is very special to me. Whenever I feel unhappy, just looking at the picture cheers me up right away. I believe that no matter what happens, my parents and my siblings will always stand by me and support me.

Describe a special meal you would like to have

You should say:

Where you would like to have it

Who you would like to have it with

What you would like to eat

And explain how you would feel about the meal

BAND 9.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would like to invite my friends to a **hot pot meal**. I would invite my closest friends, the ones that I **hang out with** and have the most **in common with**. I would of course invite my girlfriend so that she could meet my friends. That is important to me. I think my girlfriend should know what I am like when I am with my friends.

I would find a nice restaurant with a good atmosphere where the waiters are friendly and the owners are working to give you the best experience you can have. I would not choose a big **monstrous place** where everything would seem so impersonal, but instead a restaurant that has a **family ambiance**.

I would order hot pot with lots of meal, lamb, pork, beef, fish, tofu...mmm...I'm getting hungry just thinking about it. I would also order some nice vegetables and noodles, and to **top it off**, some ice cold beer to **wash it down**.

I really like hot pot because of the atmosphere it creates of everyone eating together and pulling things from the pot and dipping it in their favorite sauce, just relaxing and enjoying the food and the friendship.

Describe an item that you received and made you happy

You should say

When you received it

What the item was

Who gave it to you

And explain why you felt happy

Band 8.5 Sample Answer:

I would like to describe a coat my parents gave me as a present on my 18th birthday. I must say that it is really smart and exactly to my liking.

The coat is made of cotton only and by a famous clothes brand. It is a knee-length black coat, which was in fashion at that time. What I like the most is that there are two deep side pockets, so in winter, I always put my hands into those pockets to avoid the cold. Besides, I can button the coat from top to bottom and it's also got a decorative waist belt.

I am so fond of this coat that I usually wear it every winter. It fits me perfectly and makes me feel comfortable and warm, no matter how cold the weather is. I keep myself warm by wearing the coat with jeans and boots, which match it well.

In fact, I have never thought whether it will be out of fashion. As this coat is a gift from my parents, I treasure it a lot and – for sure - I will keep wearing this coat in the future.

Describe a person who once moved to live with you

You should say:

When and where this person moved in

How you know this person

How you got along with this person

And how you feel about living with this person

Model Answer

Well, I'm going to talk about a person who is one of my flatmate in Australia. Her name is Linda. Possibly, she is one of the best friends of mine who lived with me.

First, I would love to talk a little bit about the time and the place where she lived in. It was in a very freezing Sunday night around 2 or 3 degree Celsius. In the very heart of the winter, I mean in July, there was a girl struggling with loads of luggage knocking at the door of my house. She said hi to everyone in a very humble way. This is a sort of the scenario of how I got to know her.

There should be a fate between us, I reckon. What I mean fate here is by accident we got to know each other and we are at the same hometown back in India and

we used to live in the same area in India when both of us were going to a university in Mumbai. But we just run across with each other only in Australia.

Moving onto the next point, I would like to approach the idea of our relationship. To be honest, we were not in a very good harmony initially because of some misunderstandings and conflicts during the time we lived in under the same roof, shared the rent, bills and time clash. But gradually, we discovered out that we have a lot of common interests and characteristics.

Living with her is quite enjoyable because we could share lots of things together, but did not have to worry about bothering each other in the daily life.

Describe an interesting tradition in your country

You should say:

What the tradition is

When do you celebrate it

How do you celebrate it

And explain why it is interesting

Model Answer

India is rich in culture and tradition. The tradition I'm going to talk about today is saying 'namastey". We celebrate this tradition every day, in fact several times a day.

This is our way of greeting each other. We do it by folding our hands, palms facing each other, fingers pointing towards the ceiling, thumbs pointing towards the chest and this is accompanied by a slight bow.

This tradition is interesting because this is the biggest export of our traditions to the western culture. When I say namastey, I mean to say that I am your humble servant. It creates an aura of respect which is far more than saying hello or shaking hands.

It is said that the human body is composed of immense energy. We can turn it into a positive or negative energy. When we shake hands we transfer positive as well as negative energy. But when we fold hands, we transfer only positive energy. When we greet another person with namastey we have no physical contact because of this the other person can't be affected negatively. Whenever anyone comes to our house, we always say Namastey, no wonder this word has been adopted by all the English language dictionaries.

Describe an important skill you learned when you were a child

You should say:

What this skill was

When you learned it

How you learned it

And explain why you think it was important

Model Answer

One of the most useful skills I have learnt since I was a 10-year-old child is typing on a keyboard without looking at that is a special skill.

When I was 10 years old, my father bought me a computer, it was impossible for me to type without looking at the keys. It took longer hours for me to type a single page by searching the letters on the keys. When I started to type, it appeared to

me that the letters should be placed on the keyboard alphabetically for better use. But gradually I learnt that this way is better than the alphabetical letters.

Basically I learnt the skill at my home using my personal computer. In the very beginning, it was tougher for me to compose anything on the computer with the keyboard attached with it and it took longer hours for me to compose a document of three or four pages. So, I started using internet to get some ways to learn typing. I found some special applications that allow the users to get the desired typing skill. Besides, the applications also helped me to make the typing faster than it was in the beginning.

All of the earned skills are useful in real life but the applications may differ in situations. When I started learning the skill, I thought that it would be of no use in my practical life and I am wasting my times. But when I took part in my work, I was surprised by the applications of typing. I have started serving the office in different ways with the typing skill. As a result, my fame has increased as a typing expert and accordingly the office has evaluated my performance. I have been promoted to senior administrative officer after three months when I applied the skill to my daily works at the workplace. So, it appears to be a very useful skill for me.

Describe an activity that you do in your school after school

You should say:

When and where you do

What you like to do

Who you do it with

And how you feel about it

BAND 8.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

An activity that I like to do in my school after finishing school is playing badminton which I started to do since I was in 6th grade.

It is actually a badminton class, so we have teachers and other students too. We practice badminton here for an hour. Sometimes, we even stay there for another half an hour. Just like tennis, you can play badminton as a singles match or doubles match. The rules are pretty much the same as tennis. The only difference is that the **badminton shuttlecock** is lighter than the tennis ball, thus, it requires less strength.

Due to my short-sightedness, I am not very good at playing this game but I enjoy it anyway. Firstly, it helps keep me fit. In addition, I can train my eyes to look further and faster, and it quicken my reflexes. Last but not least, it helps me a lot in improving my **teamwork skills**.

VOCABULARY:

- **badminton:** [noun] an indoor game. Players hit a small light ball, with feathers round it, across a high net, using a racket, like tennis.
- **singles match:** [noun] a game in which one player plays against one opponent.
- **doubles match:** [noun] a game in which two players play against two opponents.
- **shuttlecock:** [noun] badminton uses a shuttlecock, not a tennis ball. It is very light and it has feathers round the edge.
- **short-sightedness:** [noun] a person who can only see things if they are very close, is short-sighted.

- **train my eyes:** [verb phrase] I developed my ability to see things quickly and accurately.
- **quickened my reflexes:** playing badminton improved my ability to move and think quickly when I played the game.

Describe a method that helps you save money

You should say:

What the method is

When you started to use it

How you knew it

and explain why it is helpful

Band 8.0 Model Answer

Well, I have to admit that It has been so difficult for me to **figure out** simple ways to save money and use my savings effective to **pursue my financial goals** before. But it's so lucky for me when **I complained about it to** my friend, she suggested me using Money Lover, a useful mobile application to most useful one. Thanks to that, I am **better at** money management.

Let me tell you about it in more detail. The symbol of the app is a very cute piggy bank which impresses me a lot at the first sight. There are many expenses for clothes, food, cosmetics divided so that at the end of the month, I can know exactly what **cost me a bomb**, what are **within my budget** to **tighten the belt** next month.

It is not an **exaggeration** to say that this way of saving money changes my life for the better. I have used this app for 3 months and up to now, I have a **considerable savings** in my banking account. **To my surprise**, my friends consider me as a **shining model** for them to follow **when it comes to** talking about money saving. This makes me so **proud of myself**. In addition, my mom always **got shirty with** me for my wasting money but at the moment, she hardly **loses her temper** anymore and we seem to have better relationship than in the past.

If anyone asks which the most effective way to save money is, "Money Lover" is definitely the first thing that **comes to my mind**. Trust me, it is really helpful.

Describe a (short) journey that you disliked

You should say:

Where you went

Who you went with

What you did

And explain why you disliked this journey

BAND 8.5 Sample Answer:

I recently had a journey I wish I hadn't **bothered with**. I decided to do some shopping in the capital city. But I had lent my car to a friend for a couple of days and so I thought it would be quite fun to **hop on** a bus for a change because it's something I haven't done for a long time. So I thought that I would **set off** early and get it done in a couple of hours and be back **in time** for lunch. The shopping wasn't anything urgent, it was just that I had some free time that particular morning and thought it would be nice to do something different.

However, the journey did not go as planned. It was a really hot day and when the bus finally arrived and I got on, it was clear that the air conditioner wasn't working. What's more, the bus was **packed with** people, so within minutes I began to feel hot and sticky and extremely uncomfortable.

But what happened next was even worse. After about twenty minutes of traveling the bus started to make some really weird noises and eventually the driver **pulled over** and told us that there was a problem and that we couldn't continue. We had to wait for another twenty five minutes or so for the next bus to arrive behind us and then we all **got off** the first bus and **got on** the second bus. The second bus already had some passengers on it, and with all of us from the first bus as well there was only room to stand. The whole experience was rapidly turning into something I was beginning to seriously regret. What had **started out** as something supposedly fun and different was quickly becoming one of the worst trips ever. Eventually, we arrived in the city and I wasn't really **in a good mood** to go shopping so I stopped at a café to drink something and just relax a moment before heading to the shops.

It really has to be one of the worst trips I've ever made on a bus and now I wish I had just waited until I had my car back; it would have been so much easier.

Describe a character or personality of yours

You should say:

What it is

How it affects your life

Where you get it from

And how you feel about it

BAND 8.0 SAMPLE ANSWER:

It's fairly tough to talk about someone's own personality for I firmly believe that the way we judge ourselves fundamentally differs from other people do. Nonetheless, we all have our own idea about our own characteristics and I would like to talk about my honesty which is also one of the characters I find important and proud of.

Honesty is a great virtue and I am **in favor of** the viewpoint that if people could remain honest during the lifetime, they will be rewarded **in the long run**. To be honest, honesty inside me leads me to do everything with genuine sincerity. Therefore, I am respected and adored by everyone and especially by my friends and colleagues.

I think that I inherited this personal trait from my mother. In daily life, he also reminds me to be honest in every aspect of my life and I would **get through all ups and downs** and succeed in life.

Honesty never fails to make me feel better at work and my daily living. In other words, Honesty has made everything for me. I **earned the high-paid job** because my boss and colleagues always **have faith in** me. I have a happy family with beloved parents and brother.

Thereby, honesty is truly the personal trait I **take pride in** myself and want to share with you today.

Describe a piece of work you did quickly.

*You should say:
what work it was*

why you did it quickly
how easy or difficult it was
and explain what the result was.

Sample Answer:

I would like to talk about a piece of work that I had to do quickly, which was the preparation for a two-minute talk in the IELTS Speaking test, the one that I am taking at the moment.

I just finished this preparation a few seconds ago. When the second part of the Speaking test began, I was given a topic which required me to describe something I had done quickly. Personally I think that was a really difficult topic, and it was even more challenging since I had only one minute to prepare for the talk. I had to think really fast. The first thing I needed to do was to choose a piece of work to talk about, and this was the hardest part. At first I thought about a university project that I had to finish in five days, but then I wasn't sure whether five days is considered "quick" enough for this topic. And then an idea came to my mind. Why not talk about the very difficult work I was doing at that moment, which was to think of an appropriate topic? Then I quickly decided to choose it and made a plan for a talk about it. I had to do everything quickly because I was given only one minute for the preparation. So, I needed to think very fast and to write down all the ideas very quickly. In my opinion, preparing for a talk in just one minute is really challenging, and it's partly because I had to think in English, which isn't my first language. Luckily I managed to finish the preparation on time, and I finally had enough ideas to talk about this topic.

The result of this, um, I don't know yet because I will have to wait 13 days to see the result of this Speaking test. However, I think I have already done everything I could, and let's hope that I will get a satisfying result.

Describe a famous person that you admire

- *Who is this person*
- *What is their specialty*
- *Why do you admire him*

Sample Answers

In my to-meet list, there are so many **well – respected** celebrities whom I am desired to meet and spend time with. However, I would like to share about Pele, who is nicknamed as the greatest soccer player around the Globe.

Initially, I really need to kick off with the point that Pele was just seventeen when he first played in World Cup in Sweden of 1958 for Brazil. Despite his very young age, he was selected for the national team participating one of the biggest sport competition on the planet. Back then, he was not the star player but when his teammate was hurt, Pele went into the game. He immediately scored goal and Brazil won the World Cup. By his amazing **aptitudes** and skills, Pele was feared by other teams. The Brazilian government even named him as a **national treasure**. It is not doubtful to say that Pele is one of the biggest factors making Brazil's soccer so well – known. His last World Cup was in Mexico in 1970. Brazil scored 4 goals against Italy to win the World Cup for the third time. Another point that I would like to share is that Pele owns an admirable career that every soccer players crave for. Pele **holds many soccer records** such as having over 1000

goals in his career. He was nominated athlete of the Century in 1980 and became a member of a soccer Hall of Fame in 1993.

Although he's now retired from professional competition, Pele is still considered as a great inspiration for soccer players and lovers.